

STARS AND STRIPES[®]

Have a ball during winter in London

Travel magazine, inside



Europe observes moment of silence for tsunami victims

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Actress plays a rough Roxanne in 'Alexander'

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Rosario Dawson

Volume 63, No. 262 © SS 2005 G

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2005

50¢

DOD budget would cut high-tech items

Funds would shift to more mundane needs of Army Page 5



USC's performance makes No. 1 crystal clear

Back page



AP PHOTOS

Above: Southern Cal head coach Pete Carroll, right, and quarterback Matt Leinart celebrate prior to the presentation of the national championship trophy after defeating Oklahoma 55-19 in the Orange Bowl on Tuesday at Pro Player Stadium in Miami. Left: Southern Cal's Steve Smith (2) celebrates a first-half touchdown of the game. This year's Heisman Trophy winner Leinart (11) celebrates in the background.

STARS & STRIPES

COMING
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Scene on Sunday

Evangeline Lilly
gets 'Lost'

Scene on Sunday

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Man's weight loss efforts: A man who once weighed more than 1,000 pounds is nearly half his size after seven months in a Sioux Falls, S.D., hospital, where he was put on a strict diet and underwent gastric bypass surgery.

Patrick Deuel, 42, of Nebraska weighed 1,072 pounds when he checked into Avera McKennan Hospital in June. At the time, he was dying of heart failure.

He has lost 457 pounds; just 41 pounds of the weight loss happened after the gastric-bypass surgery that he had in October. Before the surgery, he was losing weight on an exercise program and a 1,200-calorie-a-day diet.

Kennedy Smith lawsuit: An attorney for William Kennedy Smith said he hopes his client will resume his medical career now that a Chicago judge has dismissed a civil lawsuit alleging Smith sexually assaulted his former personal assistant.

Smith, the nephew of Sen. Edward Kennedy, resigned from the Chicago-based Center for International Rehabilitation after the lawsuit was filed. The center helps victims of land mines.

The lawsuit charged that Smith bought Andrea Soulas drinks while she was celebrating her birthday in January 1999 and after taking her to his home, dragged her upstairs and assaulted her.

Smith, 44, has denied the accusations and said that Andrea Soulas demanded a \$3 million payoff in exchange for not going to court. Soulas' attorney, Kevin E. O'Reilly, has acknowledged that Soulas continued to work for Smith for the next six months and during that time had consensual sex with him on a number of occasions.

Blake trial: Prosecutors in Robert Blake's murder trial focused on the actor's demeanor after his wife was found dying of gunshot wounds to suggest that Blake was putting on an act.

Witnesses testified Tuesday in Los Angeles that Blake cried out for help for his wife, wailed hysterically and vomited on the sidewalk, but some insisted his actions didn't seem genuine so they didn't take him seriously.

The actor is charged with murder, lying in wait and soliciting two stuntmen to murder Bonny Lee Bakley, 44. If convicted, he could face life in prison.

Elizabeth Smart kidnapping: The father of Elizabeth Smart says the family wants a quick resolution to the kidnapping and sexual assault charges against the girl's alleged abductor, Brian David Mitchell — even if that means a plea deal.

"I'd just as soon have a plea deal and the whole thing be finished," Smart said in a telephone interview from his home.

On Tuesday, Smart said the important thing is that the 31-year-old Mitchell stay in jail, which is where he's been since he and his wife, Wanda Barzee, were found with Elizabeth in a Salt Lake City suburb nine months after she was allegedly taken from her home in 2002.

Case against Rudolph: Hoping to nullify a search warrant, Eric Rudolph's attorneys



Wrecked freighter: A helicopter crew delivers the first of three tanks filled with fuel from the freighter Selendang Ayu on Monday in Dutch Harbor, Alaska. The 738-foot Malaysian cargo ship split in half last month off Unalaska Island, Alaska, spilling thousands of gallons of heavy bunker fuel and diesel, and threatening a sensitive wildlife habitat on the island. Salvagers began removing oil from tanks on the freighter Monday. Three tanks holding about 358,000 gallons were breached and emptied in the days immediately following the grounding, leaving an estimated 84,000 gallons aboard to be removed.

are disputing the government's claim that he planned to turn fugitive after a 1998 Alabama abortion clinic bombing.

In court papers made public Tuesday in Birmingham, the attorneys argue the one-time soldier and woodsman would have taken more provisions if he anticipated a life on the lam in the North Carolina woods.

If Rudolph didn't plan to hide out, then he didn't "abandon" his trailer in Topton, N.C., and a later search by authorities was illegal, the attorneys contend.

Rudolph, set for trial this spring in the federal death penalty case, was the subject of a manhunt after the deadly Birmingham clinic bombing and spent more than five years on the run before his arrest in 2003.

Sheriff employees fired: A newly sworn sheriff who posted snipers on the roof to keep the peace while he summarily fired more than two dozen employees in Jonesboro, Ga., was ordered by a judge Tuesday to hire them all back.

Superior Court Judge Stephen Boswell wrote in his order that Clayton County Sheriff Victor Hill apparently fired the employees without cause and in violation of the county's civil service system.

Hill, 39, told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution that he fired the employees to "maintain the integrity of the department."

He cited the assassination four years ago of DeKalb County Sheriff Derwin Brown, another black sheriff in a nearby county who fired deputies when he took over.

Brown was gunned down in the driveway of his home on Dec. 15, 2000, three days before he was to be sworn in.

Former DeKalb Sheriff Sidney Dorsey, who was ousted by Brown in a contentious election, was convicted of ordering the hit and sentenced to life in prison.

World

Ukraine election: Losing presidential candidate Viktor Yanukovich has appealed the results of last month's election to Ukraine's Supreme Court, a court spokeswoman said Wednesday.

Yanukovich had vowed to challenge the results of the Dec. 26 counter-electoral presidential revote, which showed his opponent, opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko, winning a solid victory, according to preliminary results.

Afghanistan clashes: A clash on the border between Afghan and Pakistani troops was triggered by the crash of an unmanned American spy plane in an area where Osama bin Laden may be hiding, officials said Wednesday.

A Pakistani soldier was killed in the fight. An official with the U.S.-led force in Afghanistan said a team was sent to the crash site to destroy the wreckage. "The explosion caused one side to fire and then the other side fired back," the official said on condition of anonymity.

Military

Scrapping ghost fleet: The seventh decay-in ship deemed a high priority for scrapping is leaving the James River Ghost Fleet in Newport News, Va., headed for Brownsville, Texas.

The General Nelson M. Walker, which transported troops in World War II, is to be towed to All-Star Metals in Brownsville, Texas, where it will be dismantled. The trip, set to begin Tuesday, is subject to weather and safety clearance and the approval of the U.S. Coast Guard.

It is one of six ships slated for scrapping by Texas companies.

Stories and photo from wire services

Comics, horoscopes, advice every day in Stars and Stripes



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'It is just terrible'

Tsunami tragedy reaches Mannheim, where AAFES contractor hears of relatives' deaths

By RAYMOND T. CONWAY
Stars and Stripes

A MANNHEIM, Germany — A tear runs down Anong Rattanangantrong's cheek as she talks about her sister, niece and nephew in Thailand, who were killed Dec. 26 by the tsunami that decimated much of South Asia.

"They still haven't found my nephew," said Rattanangantrong, 64, a cleaning lady at the Army and Air Force Exchange Service food court in Mannheim, where she has worked for 24 years.

"It is just terrible," said Rattanangantrong, shaking her head.

Rattanangantrong said she was worried sick about her family when she heard the news of the earthquake and tsunami that struck the region, killing at least 140,000 people.

She tried in vain to contact her sister. Finally, a friend called from Thailand last Sunday.

"[She] told me that my sister and her two children were killed. No one saw exactly what happened to them. They were just swept away by the waves," Rattanangantrong said.

Rattanangantrong's sister, Srinuan, 51, had moved to Phuket, Thailand, from Pattaya, another resort area popular with foreign tourists, two years ago. Along with her son, Sombat, 27, and daughter, Orawan, 23, they eked out a living selling roasted chicken and Sum Tom, a spicy salad popular with Thais, from a push-cart they set up on the beach road. Working 18-hour days in the sometimes brutal tropical heat, Srinuan's family of three earned as little as \$12 a day.

"[The tsunami] happened early in the morning, so they probably were just starting to set up



"I am very sad, but I'm trying to accept what has happened because not only my family died, there were many, many others ... even our king's own grandson was killed in this tragedy."

Anong
Rattanangantrong

See related stories on
Pages 11-12

their stand," Rattanangantrong said.

Rattanangantrong talked to her sister on Dec. 20 and said she was in good spirits and business was picking up.

"She told me that Patong Beach was crowded with tourists and they were selling a lot of food," she said.

Rattanangantrong said she desperately wants to go to Thailand to make funeral arrangements for her family. However, her monthly salary of 600 euros barely pays for food and rent. And Rattanangantrong, who is classified as a local-national employee, is only eight weeks away from retirement and needs to finalize all her retirement papers with German authorities to ensure she'll receive her 300 euros a month pension.

"As much as it hurts, I just can't go now. I don't have enough money," she said.

Rattanangantrong's supervisors at AAFES, who affectionately called her "Mama-san," have tried to support her since she learned of her family's fate.

"It is really, really sad," said Val Hudson, who manages the food court and has worked with Rattanangantrong since June 2002.

"She has always been an excellent worker and has been through some pretty rough times in the past couple of years," Hudson said. "She is so close to retirement and we are going to try to help her in every possible way."

The last time Anong Rattanangantrong saw her sister, niece and nephew was in June during a trip



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANONG RATTANANGANTRONG/Special to Stars and Stripes

Orawan Rattanangantrong, left, hugs her aunt Anong Rattanangantrong during their last visit together in Pattaya, Thailand, in June 2004. Orawan, along with her mother and brother, were killed by the tsunami that hit Phuket, Thailand, on Dec. 26.

to Phuket. After visiting her family, Rattanangantrong said, she spent 29 days seeking solace, praying and living at a Buddhist temple in Pattaya.

She said her niece, Orawan, took the 16-hour bus ride from Phuket to visit her aunt at the temple. Several photographs show Orawan tightly clinging to her aunt.

It was the last time Rattanangantrong saw her niece alive.

As the days pass, Rattanangantrong, a devout Buddhist, says she is slowly trying to come to grips with her loss.

"I am very sad, but I'm trying to accept what has happened because not only my family died, there were many, many others ... even our king's own grandson

was killed in this tragedy," said Rattanangantrong.

According to Buddhist tradition, her sister and niece were cremated Sunday. Rattanangantrong is hoping that her nephew will be found safe.

"I am praying for a miracle that Sombat is still alive, but it is becoming more and more doubtful as the days pass," she said.

It is customary in Thailand for the ashes of loved ones to be taken to a temple 100 days after death to a final prayer ceremony given by Buddhist monks.

"If my nephew is dead, I am praying they find him, so I can take their ashes to the temple at the same time. I want them to be together," she said.

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A young Thai boy scavenges in a section of Patong Beach, Thailand, on Monday.

Rule OKs workplace collections for tsunami victims

By BEN MURRAY
Stars and Stripes

As part of the recent global effort to raise money for victims of the tsunami disaster in South Asia, the U.S. government's personnel agency last week relaxed a rule prohibiting federal employees from collecting money in the workplace.

According to a memo sent Dec. 30 by Kay Coles James, U.S. Office of Personnel Management director, the agency will allow federal employees to collect money at the workplace specifically for tsunami relief.

"I believe the special solicitations are the best option for Federal employees to provide relief assistance," James said in her memo.

The allowance provides a new donation option to millions of federal employees. According to the most recent statistics report published on the OPM Web site, there are more than 2.7 million federal civilian employees, 93,000 of them overseas.

On military bases, fund-raising efforts are normally regulated by strict guidelines that prohibit passing the hat in the workplace and

they also require an installation commander's approval.

According to the regulation that the Army's Installation Management Agency uses to govern funding drives, "limited fundraising activities to assist the unfortunate may be authorized by local commanders."

A spokesman for the U.S. Air Forces in Europe said it has similar regulations that require a commander's approval for all fund-raising efforts on its air bases.

Since the Dec. 26 disaster, the U.S. government has been trying to organize the enormous outpouring of donation offers by trying to direct interested people to guidelines published by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the department in charge of federal humanitarian assistance.

In that effort, the public affairs director for the Air Force's Air Mobility Command on Wednesday sent a memo to Air Force officials with instructions on how to respond to the numerous offers the command has received for items people want to deliver to the stricken area.

"We cannot simply put goods on an AMC

aircraft and move them gratis, even when the aircraft may have room and be going in the right direction," officials were told to tell callers, in the memo sent by Col. Dave Thurston.

"It makes much more sense to donate money to the aid organizations that are working the problem and know what specific goods and services are needed. It's much more cost effective to purchase goods (usually at lower cost) in the affected region than to ship them halfway around the world."

At European military bases, some efforts are getting off the ground to collect money for relief, including a fund-raising event at the Grafenwörth Training Area in Germany, and upcoming collections at some chapels.

"I've encouraged our folks through the Army footprint to ... take a dedicated offering for that relief," said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Doug Wooten at the 415th Base Support Battalion in Kaiserslautern, Germany. But Wooten said he thinks people should be careful not to donate money merely in a competitive bid to see who raises the biggest amounts.

"I think we ought to just give to be giving," he said.

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This photo of V Corps Future Operations section includes Lt. Col. Mike Hurst at far right, back row, who submitted it to "The Memory Project." The staff included U.S. Army and Marine Corps officers, as well as officers from Spain and Australia.

Photo courtesy of Mike Hurst

V Corps seeks Iraq vets' memories

Project collects everything from anecdotes to photos to preserve war's history

BY TERRY BOYD

Stars and Stripes

BAUMHOLDER, Germany — In the memories business, fresh is better.

If time heals all wounds, then time also mellows the most vivid war highlights as new memories crowd soldiers' minds.

With the "The Memory Project," the Heidelberg-based V Corps headquarters is reaching out to current and former soldiers as well as civilian employees, asking for anything from anecdotes to memoirs to photos, said Bill Roche, project coordinator. Roche also hopes to collect grassroots tips about lessons learned in Iraq for use in future rotations.

"In a sense, we're trying to capture memories before they're gone," said Roche, who conceived the idea as V Corps' chief of command information. "A lot of these guys are going to go ... to [change stations] or leave the Army, and with them go memories and photos. It's amazingly easy to let that stuff get away from you."

So far the response has been "slow" to the year-old project, he said.

"We've had a lot more promises" than submissions, including the promise of 45,000 photos from one Army photographer alone. "We haven't seen them yet."

It may be difficult for people to understand that what they did in Iraq already

is history worth documenting, and that they may be sitting on significant artifacts, Roche said.

Units under the corps umbrella include about 35,000 soldiers and a large number of civilians — most of whom were deployed to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom from January 2003 through April 2004. Considering the numbers, Roche said he's certain that there is a huge amount of history out there worth collecting.

Some of the Memory Project submissions may be used in V Corps public affairs publications or presentations, he said. Other material may be used for future exhibits. The majority will be handed over to the V Corps historian to be archived.

"In 20 years, if V Corps still exists, we'll have the documents archived. If not, they'll go to the national archives or to the U.S. Army Center of Military History," Roche said.

Wherever submissions end up, they go unexpurgated. Corps officials will not censor or edit the submissions, preferring to preserve the individual experience, Roche said.

"We will not ask anyone to self-censor, and we won't censor or edit," he said. "We even want to keep misspellings" to preserve the authenticity.

That said, he added that some submissions already have proven dicey. Corps

officials will not publish — though they will still archive — materials that reveal sensitive or classified operational details. All documents will be subject to legal review before being published, used on the "Memories" Web site or released publicly, Roche said.

Mike Hurst, a Hohenfels, Germany-based analyst for Grumman Information Technology at Camp Albershof, was in Iraq from January 2003 through February 2004 as an Army Reserve lieutenant colonel with the 7th Joint Task Force Augmentation Team.

His submission captures a unique moment for a unique group wearing different uniforms, assembled from around the world in front of Saddam's "Water Palace" near Baghdad International Airport, Hurst said. The photo, taken in October 2003, shows the future operations staff at Camp Victory, V Corps headquarters, before the joint task force staff from the United States, Spain and Australia returned home, Hurst said.

"My boss, Col. [Sean] MacFarland, the V Corps operations officer, wanted a picture of them before they all started disappearing," he said. "Why did I decide to participate? For posterity," he said.

Someday, Hurst said, he might be at the new Army museum, "and who knows... maybe I'll look up and see that photo."

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Sailor's wife dies from car crash injuries

BY SCOTT SCHONAUER

Stars and Stripes

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain — The wife of a U.S. servicemember stationed in Rota has died from injuries suffered in a two-car accident a week ago, a Navy spokeswoman said.

Noelia Ruiz Martinez died Tuesday at a hospital in Cadiz, according to Navy Lt. Allie Freeman.

Martinez and her husband, Petty Officer 3rd Class William Hernandez, were involved in a head-on collision Dec. 30. Hernandez, who is assigned to the base's Supply Department, remains hospitalized recovering from a broken pelvis and femur.

The couple was driving on CA-603 in El Puerto de Santa Maria around 5 p.m. when they smashed into a car driven by a female U.S. sailor assigned to Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron Two. The crash occurred near the Venta Vaca restaurant, which is about two miles from the naval station's El Puerto de Santa Maria Gate.

Martinez, a Spaniard originally from nearby Jerez de la Frontera, was driving at the time of the accident, Freeman said. She was listed in serious, but stable condition last week. The sailor in the other car was treated and released from the base hospital with minor injuries.

A funeral for Martinez was scheduled for Wednesday evening in Jerez. The Navy is investigating the accident.

The death of Martinez is the third involving people from the base in the last week. On New Year's Day, a pair of sailors died in separate, unrelated incidents. Petty Officer 3rd Class Dexter C. Orsling fell unconscious on the way to a party, and Petty Officer 2nd Class Ronald S. Atwood died in a single-car crash near the base.

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2 military-themed channels to battle

BY PATRICK DICKSON

Stars and Stripes

Cable giants Discovery Communications and the Arts and Entertainment Networks are ready to battle with new military-themed channels. A&E's History Channel announced Wednesday that it has launched the Military History Channel, a 24-hour network devoted solely to military programming.

History Channel's offensive comes just weeks after Discovery announced plans to convert its Discovery Wings Channel, with its aviation focus, to the Military Channel effective Jan. 10.

While American Forces Network will not televise either station in its entirety, the new breadth of programming will give AFN more to choose from at its existing stations, according to Larry Marotta, chief of television programming.

"We air military topics on our Spectrum channel," Marotta said. "We basically cherry pick programs" from various cable stations.

Discovery said in a press release that it would take viewers behind the lines to tell "the personal stories of servicemen and women" as well as look at military technology, battlefield strategy, aviation and history.

A&E said its Military History Channel will tell of "great battles both famous and obscure," code breakers and spies, "to the life of a soldier and the equipment used."

With a little help from the family



Maj. Gen. Jason Kamiya, commander of the Southern European Air Task Force (Airborne), gets some help putting on his second stars from wife, Carmen, and daughter, Jamie, during a promotion ceremony Wednesday at Caserma Ederle in Vicenza, Italy. Kamiya, who will command Joint Task Force-76 in Afghanistan in a few months, was joined by Italian dignitaries and Gen. B.B. Bell, U.S. Army Europe commander, at the ceremony. Both Bell and Kamiya thanked the Italian hosts for their participation in recent operations around the world and expressed condolences for Italian victims of the tsunami in South Asia.

NEXT HARRIS: Stars and Stripes

Report: AF, Navy hit hard in budget-cut plan

BY JONATHAN WEISMAN
AND RENAE MERLE

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Rising war costs and a stubborn budget deficit have forced the Pentagon to propose billions of dollars in cuts to advanced weapons systems, as the military refuses spending from its vision of a transformed fighting force to the more down-to-earth needs of its ground troops.

An internal defense budget document for fiscal 2006 shows a vivid shift of emphasis from procuring the weapons of the future to fighting the wars of the present, numerous defense analysts said Tuesday. The Air Force and the Navy — once favored by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld — would have to sacrifice some of their high-tech weapons development for the humble needs of the Army, such as tank treads and armor.

"The Air Force and the Navy are paying the bills to fix the Army's shortfall in resources," said Loren Thompson, defense industry analyst with the Lexington Institute. The internal budget document, approved by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, and leaked to reporters over the weekend, shows deep cuts to weapons programs owned by the future of the military, including an Air Force advanced fighter plane, a stealthy Navy destroyer, a fleet of modernized transport aircraft and the next generation of nuclear submarines. Even



U.S. Air Force officials and Lockheed Martin workers look at a new F/A-22 Raptor stealth air dominance fighter at the aircraft plant in Marietta, Ga., in October. Analysts said Monday that the Pentagon will likely downsize the Lockheed-built F/A-22 Raptor program.

President Bush's prized missile defense program would be trimmed by \$5 billion. In all, cuts over six years would total \$55 billion, mostly from the Navy and the Air Force.

In contrast, Army ground forces, which Rumsfeld had once hoped to reduce and de-emphasize, would receive an additional \$25 billion through 2011. Those funds would be dedicated to an ongoing Army initiative

to break down its large divisions into smaller, "modular" brigades that would be more mobile and flexible.

With the cutbacks and additions, the Pentagon would trim \$30 billion over the next six years from its original \$89 billion defense buildup, according to the budget document, which was first reported by InsideDefense.com. The total military budget still is

likely to exceed the 2005 level. At the same time, the White House is preparing an emergency spending bill to fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that could total between \$80 billion and \$100 billion, congressional defense aides say.

White House officials last year informed all federal agencies and departments, including the Defense Department, that they would have to contribute to the president's effort to cut the budget deficit in half, as Bush has pledged, according to Chad Kolton, a spokesman for the White House budget office.

Some of the cuts would fall on programs long questioned by Rumsfeld. The F/A-22 Raptor fighter jet, which critics have labeled a Cold War relic, is slated for a \$10.4 billion cut through 2011. The cut would cost the Air Force 96 advanced fighters.

"No one had anticipated that the cost of F/A-22 would continue to grow like this," said Don Zakheim, an original member of Rumsfeld's team who retired as Pentagon comptroller last year. Now, he said, "clearly they are concerned about the deficit on one hand and Iraq on the other."

"They've suddenly realized the war in Iraq and the deficit require them to make tough choices on the defense budget," said Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., a member of the Armed Services Committee.

Kolton cautioned that final decisions on the president's 2006 budget request are still about two weeks away.

Marine jailed after refusing order for religious reasons

BY ESTES THOMPSON

The Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. — A Marine who re-enlisted with the Marine Corps after becoming a Seventh-Day Adventist has been jailed for refusing to pick up a gun.

Cpl. Joel D. Klimkewicz, 24, of Birch Run, Mich., was sentenced last month to a court-martial to seven months in Camp Lejeune brig. He also received a reduction in rank to private and a bad conduct discharge.

Klimkewicz was charged with refusing to obey an order in April 2003 to draw a weapon from his unit's armory for a training exercise in preparation for an Iraq deployment.

In refusing the order, Klimkewicz told his superiors he was a conscientious objector and cited his new status as a member of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

The church supports noncombatant status for its members who serve in the military, but leaves such decisions to a member's individual conscience.

Klimkewicz joined an Adventist church in Jacksonville before he re-enlisted in 2003. He

sought conscientious objector status, which was rejected in March 2004.

"Conscientious objector status has to be granted," said Capt. Jeff Pool, a spokesman for the 2nd Marine Division at Lejeune.

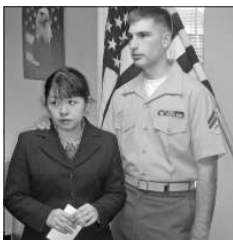
Since he never got conscientious objector status, Pool said, "it was just simply disobeying an order. That is what he was charged with."

The timing of Klimkewicz's conversion and re-enlistment were issues in his case, church attorney Mitchell Tyner, who is defending Klimkewicz, said Tuesday. But the Marine Corps said he should have known better than to re-enlist after joining the church, he said.

"Marines are not in box on this kind of thing," Tyner said in a telephone interview from the church office in Silver Spring, Md. "The whole thing comes down to the timing."

Tyner said Klimkewicz was to be one of 10 troops sent to Iraq as replacements for other Marines. He told authorities he would work removing mines in Iraq, but did not want to carry a weapon.

Tyner said Klimkewicz performed normal functions as a combat engineer during his first enlistment, but got interested in the



Marine Cpl. Joel David Klimkewicz, right, shown with his wife, Tomomi, was court-martialed after citing religious reasons for refusing an order to get a weapon from an armory. He was sentenced to seven months in jail.

church during Bible study while on deployment and later learned about conscientious objectors.

"He may have been less than perceptive (in refusing to take a weapon) but to volunteer to go out and clear mines, you're not a coward," the lawyer said.

Marines help save trucker in crash

The Associated Press

WESTPORT, N.Y. — Four Marines driving on the Adirondack Northway to a meeting in Albany were credited Monday with rescuing a man from the burning cab of his fuel tanker.

The accident, which happened around noon, closed the southbound lanes of Interstate 87 near Exit 31 for about seven hours, state police said.

Westport Fire Chief Jim Westover said a fire was a factor when the nearly empty tanker rammed into the back end of a tractor-trailer.

The blaze was contained in about an hour and did not spread beyond the cab.

Before emergency crews arrived, the Marines "pulled the gentleman out of the burning truck and carried him in a sleeping bag," Westover said. "Just getting the gentleman out of the truck made a big difference."

The driver, 57-year-old Cornelius Mahar of Rensselaer, was hospitalized in critical condition.

The tractor-trailer's driver, 36-year-old Gloria Morgan of Lynchburg, S.C., sustained minor injuries, state police said.

The Marines involved were Pfc. William Patnode, Charles Meskunas and Gregory LaFontaine and Pvt. James Stewart.

Westport is 36 miles south of Plattsburgh.

'Homecomings' planned for Vietnam veterans

BY JAMES HANNAH

The Associated Press

DAYTON, Ohio — When Mike Jackson came back from Vietnam in 1972, he was met by anti-war protesters — not exactly a warm and fuzzy hello.

Now, 30 years after the war ended, Jackson is helping organize an event to warmly welcome Vietnam veterans home.

"You've got a whole segment of the population that went through the same thing I did," said Jack-

son, who wrote a war memoir titled "Naked in Da Nang."

"I just want somebody to say thank you, somebody to say welcome home. It would mean a lot."

Jackson is spearheading Operation Welcome Home, a four-day celebration to be held on Veterans Day weekend in Las Vegas. A similar event, Operation Homecoming USA, is set for June in Branson, Mo. A highlight of both will be a parade.

There haven't been many ceremonies and parades over the

years for America's 7.9 million Vietnam veterans, though there was a homecoming parade 20 years ago in New York City that drew about 25,000 former soldiers.

Military historian J. Michael Wenger can't recall any official homecoming parades during or shortly after the war.

"The military was just ready to have it done with," said Wenger, of Raleigh, N.C., who also has written about the Vietnam War. "It would have been a publicity

nightmare. It would have attracted protesters like a magnet."

Jackson, 57, vividly recalls his June 25, 1972, return to the United States. Anti-war protesters were at the airport in San Francisco to harass him and his fellow soldiers as they caught flights home.

"We walked a gauntlet through these guys on either side of us, putting signs in front of your face and screaming at you," recalled Jackson, who flew 210 combat missions during the war.

"This was our welcome home."

Insurgents attack Iraqi police graduation

Car bomb kills at least 20 as officials reaffirm Jan. election will go forward

BY DUSAN STOJANOVIC

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — A car bomb exploded outside a police academy south of Baghdad during a graduation ceremony Wednesday, killing at least 20 people amid a surge in violence ahead of a landmark election. Hours earlier, another car bomb killed two Iraqis in the nation's capital.

The bloodshed raised the death toll from insurgent attacks to more than 90 in the last four days. Despite the insurgency, American and Iraqi leaders insist the vote would go forward as scheduled.

"We will not allow the terrorists to stop the political process in Iraq," Iraqi Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said Wednesday. "The elections process is the basis for the deepening of the national unity in Iraq."

The attacks are "intimidation," designed to discourage Iraqis from cooperating with coalition forces and vote in the elections for Jan. 30, Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli, commander of the Multi-National Division-Baghdad, and commander of the Army's 1st Cavalry Division said in a Wednesday teleconference with Pentagon and Baghdad reporters.

The explosion outside a gate of the police academy in Hillah killed at least 20 people and wounded an unspecified number, said Capt. Hady Hater.

Polish Lt. Col. Artur Domanski, a spokesman for the multinational forces in Hillah, said at least 10 policemen were killed and 41 others were injured in the suicide attack.

"I'm afraid that this number can increase," he said.

In Baqubah, 30 miles northeast of Baghdad, a suicide attacker rammed his car into a joint police and Iraqi National Guards checkpoint, killing five policemen and wounding eight other Iraqis, U.S. military spokesman Maj. Neal O'Brien said. The vehicle's driver also was killed.

The number of Iraqi policemen killed in the last four months of

2004 was at least 1,300, according to Iraqi Interior Ministry figures released Wednesday.

Earlier Wednesday, an explosives-filled car following a convoy of U.S. and Iraqi troops detonated in Baghdad's western district of Amariyah, killing two Iraqi civilians and wounding 10, police officials said. No troops were hurt.

The attack also came as a funeral procession was held nearby for slain Baghdad governor Ali al-Haidari, who was known for cooperating closely with U.S. troops. Al-Haidari was killed Tuesday. It was unclear if Wednesday's suicide car bomb was targeting the mourners, which included Iraqi officials, or the convoy of troops.

Yet U.S. forces in Baghdad are having more success in locating suicide bombers driving cars or trucks, or "VBIEDs," in the current military parlance, for vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices, according to the top U.S. military commander in that city.

"For every (VBIED) you've seen going off, U.S. and Iraqi troops have found one such weapon," Chiarelli, who has about 35,000 troops under his control in the Baghdad area, said. "We're seeing the number of rocket and mortar attacks going down," as well as the number of roadside bombs, or improvised explosive devices, which is "about 50 percent of what it has been in the recent past, he said.

The diminished attacks are "a real, real positive thing," said Chiarelli, although he declined to cite precise numbers. In Ramadi meanwhile, four Iraqi civilians were killed and two others were injured when U.S. soldiers opened fire after their convoy was attacked by rocket-propelled grenades, according to Dr. Riyadh al-Hiti of the Ramadi hospital. The U.S. military had no immediate information about the incident.

A U.S. soldier belonging to



The coffin of assassinated Baghdad province governor Ali al-Haidari is carried Wednesday during a funeral procession in Baghdad. A car following a convoy of U.S. and Iraqi troops detonated near the procession, but it was unclear if the target of the attack was the mourners, which included Iraqi officials, or the convoy.

Task Force Olympia was killed and two were wounded after their patrol was attacked with small-arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire Tuesday afternoon in Tal Afar in northern Iraq, the U.S. military said Wednesday.

The attacks have prompted Sunni Arab clerics to call for a boycott of the vote.

Chiarelli, however, cited a poll that he said indicated "80 percent of the people in Baghdad want to go to the polls."

Chiarelli said that the U.S. military did not take the poll, and did not cite the source. Chiarelli said U.S. military officials "expect the security situation to be better by January 30" — at least in Baghdad.

Asked how he plans to achieve that goal, Chiarelli said while he expects violence in the capital "to continue to spike" before the elections, U.S. forces "have some time" to seek out insurgent forces.

"We will not allow the insurgents to gain traction," he said.

Stars and Stripes reporter Lisa Burgess contributed to this report.

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Tuesday, at least 1,336 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,049 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is one higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated at 10 a.m. Tuesday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand, and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,198 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 940 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

Since the start of U.S. military operations in Iraq, 10,252 U.S. servicemen have been wounded in hostile action, according to a Defense Department tally released Tuesday.

The latest deaths reported by the U.S. Central Command:

- A Marine was killed Tuesday in Iraq's Anbar province.
- A soldier was killed Tuesday by an explosive near Balad, Iraq.
- Three soldiers were killed Tuesday by an explosive in north Baghdad.

The latest identifications reported by family:

- Marine Sgt. Thomas Houser, 22, Council Bluffs, Iowa; killed near Fallujah, Iraq, assigned to 2nd Force Reconnaissance, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Intel chief says terrorists in Iraq number in thousands

BY MAAMOUN YOUSSEF

The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — Between 20,000 and 30,000 terrorists are operating throughout Iraq, led by Syria-based former regime leaders, Iraq's intelligence chief told Wednesday's edition of a pan-Arab newspaper.

Maj. Gen. Mohammed Abdullah al-Shahawi told Asharq al-Awsat that he expected the armed attacks would decrease and end within a year.

"We officially call them terrorists," he said, "but between 20,000 and 30,000 armed men operating all over Iraq, mainly in the Sunni areas where they receive moral support from about 200,000 people."

Al-Shahawi said the men, who are

well-organized and trained, include former Baath party members, some Islamic militant groups and former army members who lost their jobs.

Al-Shahawi said terrorist attacks would negatively affect Jan. 30 election because some people would not be able to reach polling stations.

Whether these attacks would increase or decrease, this depends on the elections result, but our expectation, as a security organ is, that the attacks will recede and end in one year," he said.

He did not elaborate.

He said the insurgents get good financial support from former leading Baathist Mohammed Yونس al-Ahmed and Sabawi al-Hassan, a half-brother of Saddam Hussein, who he said are in Syria and are easi-

ly moving in and out of Iraq. Saddam's former deputy Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri is also working with insurgents, he said.

Syria has denied Iraq accusations that the terrorists get support from Damascus and that they move freely across the border.

Iraq also accused Iran of allowing the insurgents to cross into Iraq.

Al-Shahawi said he had not seen any changes in Syrian and Iranian policies following the Iraq accusations.

"The problems are still coming from these two countries because the borders are open and the support is going on to serve their interests," he said.

The Iraqi intelligence chief said insurgent activities in Fallujah have receded since a U.S. and Iraqi military campaign

last month but that leading members fled to different areas.

He named "hot areas" where insurgents were active, including the so-called "Sunni Triangle," eastern Diyala province and border north of Hillah, about 60 miles south of Baghdad.

He said armed groups were seen stopping and searching people in the streets of the northern city of Mosul. Inside Baghdad, he named the dangerous regions as Hafsa Street and the districts of Azamiyah, Daura and Ghazalayah, as well as the road leading to the airport.

Al-Shahawi was pensioned by Saddam in 1984 and defected from Iraq in 1990. He formed an opposition military group backed by the U.S. administration. Saddam executed several members of his group, including al-Shahawi's three sons.

Former Navy SEAL says he witnessed abuse of prisoners

BY SETH HETTENA
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A former Navy SEAL testifying under a grant of immunity said he first witnessed prisoner abuse a week after his arrival in Iraq in October 2003.

The sailor, whose identity was not revealed, recalled an incident during which a hooded and handcuffed detainee was kned, punched and had his testicles twisted by SEALs in the back of a Humvee.

The scene, he said, reminded him of pro wrestling.

The sailor served in Iraq under a Navy SEAL lieutenant who faced an Article 32 hearing, the military equivalent of a civilian grand jury, at Naval Base San Diego. The hearing continued Wednesday.

The lieutenant, who also was not identified, is accused of punching Iraqi Mandel al-Jamadi and allowing other Navy personnel to abuse the prisoner, who died a short time later at Abu Ghraib prison. Al-Jamadi, a suspect in the bombing of a Red Cross facility, was captured in November 2003 by SEALs

during a joint special forces-CIA mission.

Nine other SEALs were implicated in the investigation started by the sailor, who was kicked out of the SEALs last year after he was found guilty of stealing another commando's body armor in Iraq.

The sailor said he witnessed alleged abuse in Iraq on five to 10 other occasions; the lieutenant was present for most of the episodes but did nothing to stop it, he said. The abuse continued, but less frequently, after the SEALs were instructed by a senior officer to stop mistreating detainees, he testified.

"These were my friends, my comrades," he said, noting he struggled whether to come forward about the abuse. "It wasn't easy at all."

Frank Spinner, a civilian defense attorney, said he was filing a formal objection to the proceeding because he cannot attend and the Navy has refused to grant a delay. The lieutenant's military defense attorney, who attended the hearing, made repeated objections to the proceeding, setting the stage for a possible appeal.

Iraqi testifies at court-martial

Says he, cousin were forced into river by soldiers

BY ANGELA K. BROWN
The Associated Press

FORT HOOD, Texas — An Iraqi civilian testified Wednesday that he and his cousin were forced at gunpoint into the murky Tigris River, and that U.S. soldiers laughed while the two fought to survive in the strong current.

Marwan Fadel Hassoun said he struggled to shore, then tried to save his 19-year-old cousin by grabbing his hand, but the powerful waters swept Zaidoun Fadel Hassoun to his death.

"He was calling my name, said 'Help me! Help me!'" Marwan testified through interpreter Marwan Abdel-Rahman.

The testimony came on the second day of the court-martial for Army Sgt. 1st Class Tracy E. Perkins. He is charged with involuntary manslaughter, conspiracy, aggravated assault, obstruction of justice and lying to investigators.

Perkins, 33, and Army 1st Lt. Jack Saville, 24, are accused of ordering the men into the river near Samarra in January 2004.

Zaidoun's family said they found his body 12 days later, but defense attorneys contend he safely reached shore.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Tracy E. Perkins arrives Tuesday for his court-martial at Fort Hood, Texas. Perkins is facing charges stemming from an alleged assault and drowning of an Iraqi detainee near Samarra, Iraq. AP

Marwan said soldiers at first tried to push his cousin in, but that Zaidoun clung to them before eventually falling into the cold water. Once in the water, Marwan said he couldn't touch bottom and that the water was cold.

"They had the rifles aimed toward us, but they thought that we were dying," Marwan testified.

Several soldiers testified Tuesday that the water was not deep and that there was virtually no current.

Marwan said he is a mediocre swimmer but managed to swim against the current, grab a tree branch and pull himself up. He

said he grabbed for his cousin's hand, but the current swept him away.

On cross examination, he was asked how he was able to survive if current was so strong.

"... the power of God is stronger than anything," Marwan said. "I was fighting death. I had no other choice but to do everything possible to survive."

Perkins and Saville each face an assault charge pertaining to Marwan. The two soldiers, who face up to 29 years in prison if convicted, are part of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team out of Fort Carson, Colo., which is part of the 4th Infantry Division based at Fort Hood.

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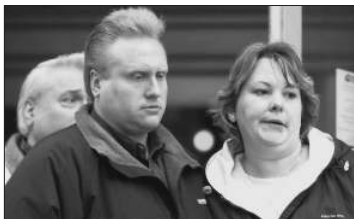
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IN THE STATES



David Banach, left, of Parsippany, N.J., stands with his wife, Allison, outside federal court Tuesday in Newark, N.J. Banach is charged under an anti-terrorism law with pointing a laser at an airplane, temporarily blinding the pilot and co-pilot.

N.J. man charged with pointing laser at passing airliner

BY WAYNE PARRY

The Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. — A man charged with temporarily blinding the pilot and co-pilot of an airplane with a laser beam claims he was simply using the device to look at stars with his 7-year-old daughter.

Federal authorities on Tuesday used the Patriot Act to charge David Banach, 38, with interfering with the operator of a mass transportation vehicle and making false statements to the FBI. He is the first person arrested after a recent rash of reports around the nation of lasers being beamed at airplanes.

If convicted, Banach could be sentenced to 25 years in prison and fined \$500,000.

The FBI acknowledged the incident had no connection to terrorism but called Banach's actions "foolhardy and negligent."

Banach, of suburban Parsippany, admitted to federal agents that he pointed the light beam at a jet and a helicopter over his home near Teeterboro Airport last week, authorities said. Initially, he claimed his daughter aimed the device at the helicopter, they said.

Banach's lawyer said his statements were given during several

hours of questioning without an attorney present and that he was being harshly prosecuted because he was eager for an arrest.

"My client is in some ways a sacrificial lamb," attorney Gina Mendola-Longarzo said. "A message is being sent."

The jet, a chartered Cessna Citation, was landing Dec. 29 with six people aboard when a green light beam struck the windshield three times at about 3,000 feet, according to court documents. The pilot and co-pilot were temporarily blinded but were able to land the plane safely.

Mendola-Longarzo said her client was simply using the hand-held device to look at stars with his daughter on the family's deck. She said Banach bought the device on the Internet for \$100 for his job testing fiber-optic cable.

"He wasn't trying to harm any person, any aircraft or anything like that," she said.

Last month, the FBI and the Homeland Security Department sent a memo to law enforcement agencies saying there is evidence that terrorists have explored using lasers as weapons. But federal officials have said there is no evidence any of the current incidents were part of a terrorist plot.

Vets' groups speak against Bush nominating Gonzales

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Several veterans groups on Wednesday joined the chorus of opposition to President Bush's nomination of Alberto Gonzales as attorney general, calling his legal opinions on torture a threat to U.S. forces worldwide.

On Tuesday, 12 retired admirals and generals — including former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. John Shalikashvili — sent a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee urging them to closely examine Gonzales' position on torture before they approve him.

Veterans for Common Sense, which represents about 12,000 former military personnel, and other related groups took their criticism of Gonzales even further by asking senators to oppose his nomination.

"Not only does his position (on torture) violate the laws of the United States, but it has also endangered our U.S. servicemen," said retired Air Force Col. Richard Klass, president of the Veterans Institute for Security and Democracy.

"Judge Gonzales has opened the way for any tin-horned dictator or corrupt head of state to do the same to our troops."

Critics attacked the White House counsel not only for his January 2002 memo calling the Geneva Convention "obsolete" and "quaint" but also for what they call failings in his judicial review of death penalty cases while an adviser to Bush while the president was governor of Texas.

"We are not just opposed to torture because it is counterproductive; it is just plain wrong," said Ray McGovern, a former CIA analyst. "It is the rule of law that distinguishes us from the animals, who can't tell right from wrong. This is not just an academic exercise."

The groups submitted their own letter to the Senate, signed by nearly 3,600 veterans, asking that the controversies surrounding the torture memos be the focus of their confirmation hearings.

Those hearings for Gonzales are scheduled to begin Thursday.

E-mail Leo Shane at: shaneleo@stripes.osd.mil

Snow, ice stretch from Rockies to Northeast

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Motorists and pedestrians slid on slippery pavement Wednesday morning as a storm spread snow and thick layers of ice from the Rockies to the Northeast, cutting off electricity to thousands of homes and businesses and giving some children a holiday from school.

Up to an inch of ice had formed in the Kansas City area, and lay-

ers a half-inch thick glazed highways and power lines in Iowa and the Texas Panhandle, causing numerous traffic accidents.

Snow was scattered from the Colorado Rockies across the Plains and Great Lakes all the way into sections of New England.

Accumulations of up to a foot were possible by Thursday in parts of Michigan, South Dakota and Iowa, where wind gusting to

25 mph caused drifting, meteorologists said. Nebraska already had nearly a foot and accumulations of 18 inches were possible.

A second wave of snow and sleet was expected to move across Kansas City and other parts of the Plains and adjacent regions Wednesday afternoon, adding fresh misery for people dealing with downed trees and power lines, said Mike Hudson, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service.



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Bush eyes new Social Security plan

WASHINGTON — President Bush is expected to unveil his plan for a Social Security overhaul in late February, with administration officials eyeing investment accounts that would hold two-thirds of workers' annual payroll taxes.

An administration official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the size of the private accounts could be similar to those in a proposal by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and the main plan from Bush's 2001 Social Security commission.

The White House cautioned Tuesday that Bush had not decided on a specific plan.

From The Associated Press

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Study: Access to 'morning-after pill' doesn't affect sexual habits

BY MARC KAUFMAN
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Providing women with easy access to the emergency contraceptive Plan B did not lead them to engage in more risky sexual behavior, a study of more than 2,000 young California women has concluded.

The study did find that women given a supply to keep at home were almost twice as likely to use the drug after unprotected sex as those who had to pick it up at a clinic or pharmacy. The findings led the study authors to conclude that easy access to Plan B, also called the morning-after pill, could cut the number of unwanted pregnancies while posing no apparent risk to women.

The study contradicts a key claim made by opponents of easier access to Plan B at a time when the Food and Drug Administration is preparing to decide on a second application to allow non-prescription sales of the drug.

In an indication of the strong feelings on both sides, advocates of Plan B plan to sit in Friday at FDA headquarters in suburban Bethesda, Md.

The FDA turned down the initial application last May, saying there wasn't enough information on how easy access would affect the sexual behavior of young teens.

"Our findings were that women don't change their sexual behavior when the drug is easily available,

but rather that they're more likely to use it if access is easier," said lead author Tina Raine of the Center for Reproductive Health Research and Policy of the University of California, San Francisco.

The study looked at 2,117 San Francisco-area women ages 15 to 24 who were randomly put into one of three groups. One third were given the drug to take home, one third were told it could be picked up without a prescription at a clinic, and the final third could get it without a prescription at a pharmacy.

The study found that roughly the same percentage of each group had unprotected sex over a six-month period, that incidence of sexually transmitted disease was equal, and that about the same percentage became pregnant.

Nonetheless, about 37 percent of women in the group given Plan B to take home used it at least once during the six months, compared with 21 percent in the clinic-access group and 24 percent in the pharmacy-access group.

The FDA's initial decision to reject non-prescription sales touched off sharp criticism — from FDA's staff and members of its expert advisory panel, among others — that the agency was bowing to political pressure from social conservatives. In a letter to President Bush, 49 members of Congress asked that the application be rejected.

The medical profession does

not consider emergency contraception to be an abortion pill like RU-486, or Mifeprex, because Plan B works by preventing a pregnancy from starting rather than ending an existing one. But some critics of Plan B consider it an abortifacient.

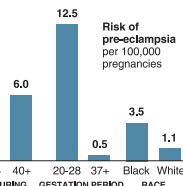
The new study, published Wednesday in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, supports the position taken by much of the FDA review staff and 23 of 27 members of the FDA advisory panel that the drug could be safely and properly used without a prescription.

Plan B consists of the synthetic progestin levonorgestrel and is most effective when used within 24 hours of an unprotected sexual encounter. While the FDA has approved it only for prescription use, six states have passed laws that allow pharmacists to dispense the drug without a prescription after a discussion with the woman.

The University of California study was initiated in part to see whether getting the drug from a pharmacy would be more acceptable to women than getting it from a clinic, and Raine said the results appear to show it was not. The study was funded by grants from a number of private foundations that invested in the Women's Capital Corporation, which initially developed the drug. Raine said neither the foundations nor Barr Pharmaceuticals, which supplied the drugs for the women, had any influence over the study.

Protein linked to pregnancy risk

Researchers discovered low levels of a protein in the urine of pregnant women may help in the development of a test to detect pre-eclampsia — a complication affecting both the mother and the unborn baby leading to high blood pressure, seizures, strokes and kidney damage.



SOURCES: National Center for Health Statistics; National Institutes of Health

AP

Researchers find protein predicts pregnancy risk

BY MIKE COLIAS
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — A simple urine test during pregnancy could someday predict which women are likely to develop dangerously high blood pressure called pre-eclampsia, a condition that can lead to premature births and can kill mothers-to-be, researchers say.

Pre-eclampsia occurs in as many as 8 percent of U.S. pregnancies, often striking healthy women without warning, and can lead to seizures, strokes and kidney damage. The cause is unknown, and there is no reliable way in use today to predict who will develop it. The only known cure is to deliver the baby, often prematurely.

But a new study offers hope for the development of a urine test over the next few years that could identify high-risk women several

weeks or even months before pre-eclampsia develops.

The study found that urine samples from women who eventually developed pre-eclampsia had extremely low levels of a protein called placental growth factor, which nurtures blood vessels that support the mother and fetus.

The same researchers reported last year that blood samples also can predict the disease. But they said a urine test could allow women to screen themselves and would be much easier to administer in Third World countries.

While a screening test would not prevent the disorder, doctors could monitor at-risk women more closely to prevent complications, and such patients could, for example, be put on blood pressure drugs or medication to prevent seizures.

The study, published in Wednesday's *Journal of the American Medical Association*, compared samples from 120 women who eventually developed pre-eclampsia to specimens from 118 women who did not develop the condition.

Women with the lowest placental growth factor levels were nearly 23 times more likely to develop pre-eclampsia before their 37th week of pregnancy than the rest of the women. Researchers detected low levels of the protein as early as the 25th week of pregnancy.

"If there were a self-administered test developed, similar to a pregnancy kit, it could tell women if they're in trouble and to see their doctor right away," said Dr. Richard Levine, the study's lead author and research medical officer at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which funded the research.

Levine estimated it would take at least four years to develop such a test.

Dr. Cathy Spong, chief of the pregnancy and perinatology branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, said researchers have searched for decades for a predictor of the disease.

"These findings are very exciting," Spong said. "But just because we know they're going to develop pre-eclampsia, if it develops early on, it could still have devastating outcomes. Ideally we'd like to get to intervention."

Levine said placental growth factor could someday be given to at-risk women to prevent pre-eclampsia.

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O'Hare tops in takeoffs, landings

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — O'Hare International Airport handled nearly a million takeoffs and landings in 2004, more than any other airport, but it is running behind perennial rival Atlanta for the top spot in number of passengers, officials said.

A surge in regional flights pushed the number of takeoffs and landings at O'Hare to 992,471 last year, a 6.6 percent increase over 2003, the Federal Aviation Administration said Monday.

Regional jets accounted for more than 40 percent of the approximately 2,850 daily flights at O'Hare, up from less than a third, or 33 percent, of all flights three years ago, officials said.

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport came in second, with 962,460 takeoffs and landings in 2004, according to the FAA.

But Hartsfield was on pace to handle the most passengers in 2004. Through October — the last data available — Hartsfield accommodated 65.8 million passengers, and O'Hare handled 63.5 million, according to the federal Bureau of Transportation Statistics.



Lost and unclaimed luggage is lined up in front of the customer service office Sunday at the US Airways terminal at Philadelphia International Airport. Representatives for US Airways baggage handlers said the number of sick calls by the workers during the Christmas weekend was in line with past years and was not to blame for the problems the airline experienced, despite what the company alleged.

Handlers deflect blame for holiday baggage fiasco

BY DAN FITZPATRICK
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The head of US Airways' baggage handlers is not confident that a cost-cutting agreement can be struck with the airline by Thursday, when a bankruptcy judge could decide the issue for them by canceling their contract and freeing the airline to impose cuts of its choosing.

Randy Canale, president of the International Association of Machinists District 141, offered his four assessment of negotiations in Philadelphia where he and other union officers also tried to deflect blame for US Airways' Christmas weekend travel fiasco.

The company originally attributed the problems — which delayed hundreds of flights, misplaced untold numbers of bags and inconvenienced thousands of passengers — to a high number of sick calls from baggage handlers and flight attendants.

But the baggage handlers, as did flight attendants last week, contended that the number of people calling in sick was comparable to past holidays and that the company should have been better

prepared for the crunch of bad weather and high traffic.

"There is a perception that we are the bad guys," said Robert Boland, president of the IAM Local Lodge 1776 in Philadelphia. Such a perception, he said, "is untrue."

The finger-pointing added to the stress both baggage handlers and US Airways are feeling as they work to rehabilitate the airline's image and to reach a deal that could save the airline more than \$100 million a year.

The danger for the IAM is that U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Stephen Mitchell could void the union's contract on Thursday absent negotiated concessions, allowing the company to impose even stiffer pay and benefit cuts.

Canale, who speaks for more than 4,000 baggage handlers at US Airways, said he did not "see much hope of reaching a consensual agreement" before Thursday, but acknowledged that there was still time to get something done.

Boland, a member of Canale's negotiating committee, was slightly more upbeat, saying he thought the two sides "were pretty close" to an agreement last week.

GOP continues to urge revote in Washington; ad focuses on military

BY REBECCA COOK
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. — Despite Republicans' demands for a new statewide vote on their new radio advertising campaign, the Democratic leaders who control the state Legislature say the governor's election is over.

"We are following the rules and we need to live by those rules, and not just call for a do-over because we don't like the results," Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown said Tuesday.

Democrats, who hold a majority in the state House and Senate, stood firmly behind Gov. elect Chris Gregoire, who beat Republican Dino Rossi by 129 votes after a hand recount of 2.9 million ballots cast. Rossi, who won the first count and a machine recount, has not conceded and may contest the election in court.

A top Republican, House Minority Leader Bruce Chandler, said the Legislature should delay ratifying the results of the election until more questions are answered. He disagreed with Rossi's contention that the recount process followed the rules.

"The people of this state clearly have lost confidence in the elec-

tion process," Chandler said Tuesday. "The truth of the matter is, we don't know who won this election, and we never will."

He and Brown spoke at The Associated Press Legislative Preview on Tuesday.

Also Tuesday, radio stations began running ads paid for by the state Republican Party, declaring the governor's election a "certified mess" and urging people to petition the Legislature for a new election.

The new Republican ad campaign focuses on a Washington state Marine wounded in Iraq, Tyler Farmer, who didn't get his ballot until Nov. 3, the day after Election Day. Republicans argue many military voters were disenfranchised.

The issue drew about 100 people who held signs and chanted "revote" Tuesday night outside a restaurant popular with soldiers near Fort Lewis.

But Secretary of State Sam Reed, also a Republican, said there is no evidence of any systematic problems with the military vote.

Counties mailed absentee ballots to registered military voters by early October, Reed said.

Gregoire's inauguration is scheduled for Jan. 12.

Holiday discounts may hurt retailers

BY ANNE D'INNOCENZIO
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — A shopping spree before and after Christmas helped many U.S. retailers meet their holiday sales goals, but heavy discounting to lure customers into the stores came at the expense of profits, Wall Street analysts believe.

"It was a marginally disappointing holiday in terms of profits, but it wasn't a disaster because you had a big surge in post-holiday traffic," said John D. Morris, an analyst at Harris Nesbitt, an investment firm. "It was a holiday season marked by a stinger consumer who wanted to wait until the last minute for the markdowns."

Michael P. Niemira, chief economist at the International Council of Shopping Centers, said the performance over the last two weeks "was a pleasant surprise to an uncertain and uneven season."

The late sales surge is expected to put merchants on track for a projected same-store sales gain of 3.0 percent to 3.5 percent in December from the year-ago period, he said.

"Same-store sales" are sales at stores opened at least a year, and are considered the best measure of a retailer's health.

As for profits, stores that cut prices most aggressively — such as AnnTaylor Stores Corp., Limit-



Shoppers go down an escalator at Macy's in San Francisco the day after Christmas. Department stores such as Macy's heavily discounted items to lure shoppers just before and after the holiday. Analysts say that discounting will cut into their profits for the season.

ed Brands Inc.'s Express, and Gap Inc., or department stores such as May Department Stores Co., Dillard's Inc., Federated Department Stores Inc. and Sears, Roebuck and Co. — are expected to be hardest hit, according to analysts.

The exceptions will be luxury chains including Neiman Marcus Group Inc. and Nordstrom Inc., which have continued to enjoy robust sales as their well-heeled customers have benefited from the economy's recovery.

Another bright spot is the teen sector, particularly American Eagle Outfitters Inc., Abercrombie & Fitch Co., and Aeropostale Inc.

Ken Perkins, an analyst at RetailMetrics LLC, a research firm in Swampscott, Mass., said he believes profits will be healthy at Wal-Mart Stores Inc., the world's largest retailer, even though it was forced to step up discounting after a slow start to the holiday season.

On Monday, the behemoth discount store said it expects December sales to be at the top end of its forecast of 1 to 3 percent for December.

IN THE WORLD

Indonesia turns focus to refugee camps

Huge Australian donation pushes pledges past \$3B

The Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — Workers broke ground Wednesday for four refugee camps on the devastated island of Sumatra, where an estimated 1 million are homeless from last week's deadly tsunami, and pledges of aid — led by a new donation from Australia — topped \$3 billion.

On the eve of a summit to discuss how to distribute aid for victims of the Dec. 26 earthquake and Indian Ocean tsunami, Australia announced a package of \$764 million in grants and loans, making it the No. 1 single donor. It previously had pledged \$4 million, making its total \$810 million.

Earlier in the day, Germany increased its pledge to \$674 million, surpassing commitments by Japan of \$500 million and the United States of \$350 million.

There have been nearly 150,000 confirmed deaths from the earthquake that rattled the ocean floor and sent massive waves crashing across beachfront communities from southern Asia to Africa.

Secretary of State Colin Powell, one of the first world leaders arriving for Thursday's summit, toured the hardest-hit areas along Sumatra's flattened coast and the former general described the wreckage as worse than a war zone.

"I've been in war and I've been through a number of hurricanes, tornadoes and other relief operations, but I've never seen anything like this."



Young victims of the recent Indian Ocean quake walk among the rubble in the village of Maruthamalai in the eastern coastal area near Ampara, Sri Lanka.

The State Department has concluded that 20 more Americans originally listed as missing in the disaster are now presumed dead, a senior U.S. official said Wednesday, raising the U.S. death toll to 36. Nineteen were in Thailand and the 20th in Sri Lanka, two of the hardest-hit countries, the official said on condition of anonymity.

Germany has the highest death toll among foreigners, with at least 60 killed.

Germany auto racing star Michael Schumacher, who lost one of his bodyguards in the disaster, has pledged \$10 million in one of the single biggest donations by an individual.

President Bush has contributed \$10,000 from his personal fund to the relief effort, his spokesman said Wednesday.

On Thailand's resort island of Phuket, thousands of people gathered on a soccer field and lit candles as Christians, Muslims and Buddhists remembered the dead.

The four camps being built around Banda Aceh, the main city in northern Sumatra, are sorely needed; existing ones are overcrowded and lack proper facilities.

"The camps that are here have been improvised by the people themselves," said Michael Elmquist, who heads the U.N. relief effort in Aceh. "But these are definitely not according to our standards. The sanitation is totally insufficient."

EU, others observe moment of silence

BY WARD SANDERSON
Stars and Stripes

Europe mourned for South Asia on Wednesday.

The European Union observed three minutes of silence at noon to remember the 150,000 people killed by tsunamis the day after Christmas. Some U.S. military installations in Europe followed suit.

The Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union called for flags to fly at half-staff. Even the famously precise German rail travel squealed to a brief halt. Trains in stations at noon sat still until at least 12:01 p.m. Deutsch Bahn, the rail authority, asked its staff and customers to respect the observance.

Europe's royalty, such as the crowns of Britain and Luxembourg, also endorsed the tribute. Prayers for the dead were said in England's Canterbury Cathedral.

The U.S. Army's Installation Management Agency-Europe spread news to bases about the observance.

"We've just kind of gotten the word out for informational purposes," said Kim Walz, spokeswoman for the agency.

Bases reacted in different ways. At the 23rd Base Support Battalion in Darmstadt, base access was halted briefly at noon.

"We observed it in support," said Terri Vieth, battalion spokeswoman. "It's a natural thing to do."

E-mail Ward Sanderson at: sandersonw@mail.estripes.osd.mil

U.S. military upping contribution to relief efforts

BY ROBERT BURNS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. military on Wednesday expanded its contribution to the tsunami recovery effort in South Asia, with the Army sending helicopters

and about 100 people from bases in South Korea and the United States to fill a variety of medical and logistics needs.

The U.S. Army command in South Korea is sending several CH-47 medium-lift helicopters to help distribute humanitarian supplies

and, it may dispatch UH-60 choppers to operate as air ambulances, officials said.

The Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., is sending three civil affairs teams to help coordinate relief and one psychological operations team to

help broadcast relief information. Navy Adm. Thomas Fargo, commander of the Hawaii-based U.S. Pacific Command, told a Pentagon news conference Tuesday

that the military would roughly double the number of U.S. helicopters involved in the relief mission, to about 90. On Wednesday the Pentagon said 48 already were operating.

As of Wednesday, about 13,400 U.S. military personnel were involved in the relief effort, including 12,000 aboard ships and 1,000 in Thailand, where an air base is serving as the U.S. command center. There also are U.S. military personnel in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Malaysia.

The Pentagon also said Wednesday that 28 cargo planes, including four C-17 and six C-5 heavy lift aircraft, were flying transport missions in the area, compared with 16 planes a day earlier.

The military said it had delivered more than 610,000 pounds of relief supplies — water accounting for about half of that — as of Wednesday.

In a separate news conference Tuesday, William Winkenwerder, the assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said the military is prepared to send as many as eight portable hospitals, including a 25-bed version that could be flown aboard two C-17

For more photos and stories on military relief operations, visit www.stripes.com

cargo planes from Yokota Air Base in Japan.

The White House, meanwhile, said Tuesday that President Bush ordered the Pentagon to provide \$65 million of "defense articles and services" as disaster assistance to Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, India, Maldives, Malaysia, Myanmar, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, Bangladesh and the Seychelles.

Two 10-person teams of military and civilian forensics specialists have already been sent from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command in Hawaii to assist in recovering, sorting and identifying remains.

Winkenwerder said the Defense Department is coordinating with other government agencies and with the United Nations and World Health Organization to determine what additional medical assistance is needed.

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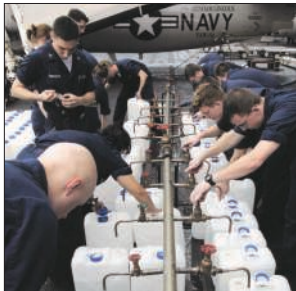
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JORDAN R. BEESLEY/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Sailors aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln fill jugs with purified water Wednesday from a potable water manifold they constructed in eight hours. The water jugs were to be flown by Navy helicopters to regions of Indonesia isolated by the tsunami.

Navy filters quenching thirst of thousands left dry by tsunami

By LEO SHANE III
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — In a cruel irony, the tsunami in South Asia has left survivors without enough water to survive. But U.S. forces are using those same ocean waves to solve the problem.

Six U.S. Navy ships providing relief in the region are pumping about 150,000 gallons of purified ocean water a day into Sri Lanka, Sumatra and Thailand, while dozens of car-sized filtration units are being delivered throughout the region to do the same.

The technology is basically the same as home faucet filters, just bigger and designed to handle more volume, according to Marine Staff Sgt. Michael Reed, spokesman for Blount

Island Command in Florida, the Marine Corps Logistics Command's agency for managing Marine Corps pre-positioning programs.

Sailors simply run the salt water through a chain of filters, then pump the potable water to shore through two miles of piping each ship carries. Barges also are being used to shuttle the purified water along the shoreline.

The ships routinely use their built-in filters to supply sailors with water while at sea. But Reed said that in the relief efforts, the systems have proved invaluable.

"It's not going to be Evian, but it's safe and drinkable," Reed said. "Getting water to these places is a huge issue."

The 41 portable units can process

more than 14,000 gallons of water a day, and are being placed in areas not easily accessible to the ship filters or other assistance vehicles.

"They're producing 10 gallons of drinking water a minute," Reed said.

U.S. ships have had the filtration technology for several decades, Reed said.

The filters have been used in past natural disaster relief efforts, as well as to supply water to ground troops during active combat missions.

World Health Organization officials have reported outbreaks of diarrhea and skin infections related to polluted drinking water, in addition to the estimated 155,000 deaths caused by the initial disaster.

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DiCaprio donates to tsunami relief

Actor Leonardo DiCaprio has made a donation to UNICEF for tsunami relief efforts in Thailand, where he spent four months shooting the 2000 movie "The Beach."

The massive tsunamis that struck on Dec. 26 have been "devastating, absolutely devastating," DiCaprio said Tuesday during a news conference to promote his film "The Aviator."

On Thailand's Phi Phi Island, where "The Beach" was filmed, 200 bungalows at two resorts were swept out to sea, and resort officials said many foreign tourists were among the missing.

DiCaprio, 30, didn't say how much he'd donated.

He recalled Phi Phi as "one of the most pristine, beautiful places I have ever been in my life."

DiCaprio also has set up a link on his Web site so that visitors can make a donation to UNICEF.



DiCaprio

Dolphin freed from lagoon

KHIAO LAK, Thailand — The third time was the charm.

Rescue workers freed an Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin from a small lagoon where the Asian tsunami had dumped it — returning it to the Andaman Sea in a rare story of survival 10 days after the massive waves crushed posh tourist resorts in the surrounding Khao Lak area.

"She's out!" Edwin Wiek, a Dutchman who is director of the Wildlife Friends of Thailand Rescue Center, said jubilantly. "I think she's going to survive."

The dolphin, spotted Monday about half a mile from the beach by a man searching for his missing wife, had become a symbol of hope amid the death and destruction.

The fate of a second, smaller dolphin — believed to be the larger one's calf — was unclear. It was not seen during the rescue, and Wiek said a couple of wildlife workers would maintain a vigil for a couple of hours. If it was spotted, a rescue attempt would be mounted on Friday.

Top Thai forecaster fired

BANGKOK, Thailand — Thailand's top forecaster was removed from his job Tuesday for failing to issue a warning as huge waves barreled toward tourist resorts, the prime minister said.

The country's Meteorological Department has said that it knew about the huge earthquake that struck off the coast of Indonesia's Sumatra island on Dec. 26 — and that it might produce a dangerous surge of water along the country's southwest coast — about an hour before waves began slamming ashore.

But officials said they had no way to determine the size of the waves and therefore the threat they posed. They said they were reluctant to issue a warning without such information because it could harm the tourism industry, an action that could anger the government.

From The Associated Press

Va.-based Army mortuary unit to deploy to Asia

The Associated Press

PETERSBURG, Va. — The Army's only active mortuary unit is en route to Thailand to help with the massive effort to collect and identify the dead from the tsunami-ravaged South Asia.

The 49th Quartermaster Group, 54th Quartermaster Company (Mortuary Affairs) identifies, processes and removes the remains of soldiers and civilians in combat zones and victims of disasters.

"Mortuary Affairs are a special breed of soldiers," said Sgt. 1st Class Ronald E. Holliday, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the unit. "We are trained more so than the average soldier to deal with the rigors of death."

The five teams, totaling about 30 members, left Monday night for Thailand. They will help identify the dead and process their personal items.

On Tuesday, Dr. William Winklerwerder, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said nearly all the affected countries have requested additional forensics support to deal with the tragedy.

Winklerwerder expects between 100 to 150 soldiers from the Army's mortuary unit to eventually be sent to South Asia. In addition, Pentagon officials said they are seeing if Department of Homeland Security personnel or Federal Emergency Management Association staff can assist as well.

The unit of about 245 soldiers was activated at Fort Lee in December 1988. Their training includes duty at morgues and hours of classroom work to understand human anatomy and an array of medical terms and conditions.

There are 39 Mortuary Affairs soldiers serving in Iraq and six in Afghanistan.

The soldiers have been "briefed and double-briefed" on the threats of disease while overseas, Holliday said. Health officials have said a wave of such illnesses as cholera, typhoid, dysentery and some forms of hepatitis may add to the death toll throughout the affected countries.

Infection will be another difficulty while overseas, as the soldiers will work hard to identify bodies that have been outside or stuck under rubble for more than a week. Winklerwerder said officials in the region are also reporting bodies still floating in the ocean.

"We're trained, prepared and ready to do the mission," said Holliday, who has served with the unit for 14 years. "We are prepared to give our all."

Stars and Stripes reporter Leo Shane III contributed to this report from Washington.

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ElBaradei: U.N. to tour Iran military complex

BY GEORGE JAHN
The Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — Iran has agreed to give U.N. inspectors access to a huge military complex that the United States alleges is linked to a secret nuclear weapons program, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency said Wednesday.

IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei told The Associated Press he expected his experts to visit the Parchin site "within days or weeks."

The U.N. nuclear watchdog agency has been pressing Tehran for months to be allowed to inspect the Parchin military site, used by the Iranians to research, develop and produce ammunition, missiles and high explosives. In leaps to media last year, U.S. intelligence officials said a specially secured site on the Parchin complex, 20 miles southeast of Tehran, may be used in research on weapons, specifically in making high-explosive components for use in atomic weapons.

Iran insists its military is not involved in nuclear activities and that the IAEA has no evidence at any firm evidence to the contrary. But the agency did express concern in an October report about published intelligence and media reports "relating to dual use equipment and materials which have applications ... in the nuclear military area."

Diplomats accredited to the agency said that phrasing alluded to Parchin.

On a separate issue, ElBaradei



Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Mohamed ElBaradei says that Iran will allow U.N. inspectors to see huge military site that the United States alleges is linked to a secret nuclear weapons program.

declined to comment directly on reports that Egyptian scientists experimented with small amounts of uranium compounds that could be used in a nuclear weapons program.

But he suggested that his agency did not view Egypt as violating the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, saying "any [such] proliferation concern or any implication of a weapons program" would be reported to the IAEA board of governors.

Egypt's government rejected claims it is or has been pursuing a weapons program, saying its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

Iran has been the main focus of the IAEA since mid-2002, after the discovery of two secret nuclear facilities — a uranium enrichment plant at Natanz and a heavy water production plant near Arak. That led to a subsequent IAEA investigation of what turned out to be nearly two decades of covert

nuclear activities in Iran, including suspicious "dual use" experiments and a large-scale uranium enrichment program that could be linked to weapons programs.

Iran says its activities are peaceful and geared purely toward generating electricity. But the United States and its allies believe Iran wants to make war-head-grade uranium. President Bush labeled Iran part of an "axis of evil" with North Korea and pre-war Iraq.

In a series of reports, ElBaradei has stopped short of declaring Tehran in breach of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, despite pressure by the United States to do so.

ElBaradei said he will "continue to keep the board updated" on Iran. But he told the AP on Wednesday he may not produce a new report on Tehran's nuclear activities for its next meeting in March, saying that he hoped to reduce the Iran file to "routine reporting" during the next six months.

North Korea issues wartime guidelines for attack by U.S.

BY SANG-HUN CHOE
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea has ordered its citizens to be ready for a protracted war against the United States, issuing guidelines on evacuating to underground bunkers with weapons, food and portraits of leader Kim Jong Il.

The 33-page "Detailed War-time Guidelines," published in South Korea's Kyungyang newspaper on Wednesday and verified by Seoul, was issued April 7, 2004, at a time when the communist regime was claiming it was Washington's next target following the Iraq war.

The manual — the first such North Korean document made public in the outside world — was signed by Kim Jong Il in his capacity as chairman of the Central Military Committee of the ruling Workers' Party. That ended speculation over whether Kim has assumed the top military post following the 1994 death of his father, President Kim Il Sung.

Analysts said the guidelines reflected Pyongyang's fear over a possible U.S. military strike aimed at stalled talks on its nuclear weapons programs. The guidelines were also meant to whip up a sense of crisis among its 22 million people, reportedly growing discontent amid economic hardship.

"The United States has cooked up suspicion over our nuclear pro-

grams and is escalating an offensive of international pressure to strangle and destroy our republic," the booklet said. "If this tactic doesn't work, it plots to use this [nuclear] problem as an excuse for armed invasion."

Kyungyang did not clarify where it acquired the document classified as "top secret."

Seoul's National Intelligence Service said in a one-sentence statement: "We believe the document reflects North Korea's wartime preparations."

The manual urged the military to build restaurants, wells, restrooms and air purifiers in underground bunkers, which government offices and military units will move into if war breaks out.

When North Koreans evacuate to underground facilities, they should make sure that they take the portraits, plaster busts and bronze statues of Kim and his parents so that they can "protect" them in a special room, the guidelines say.

The Kim family has ruled North Korea for more than a half-century, creating a powerful personality cult. Portraits of Kim and his father hang side-by-side on the walls of every house.

Since the Korean War ended in 1953, North Korea has built a 1.1 million-member military, the world's fifth largest, although most of its weapons are outdated. It already keeps vital military facilities in several tunnels, underground tunnels and bunkers, South Korean officials say.

Jordanian police reportedly foil plan to kill four American archaeologists

BY SHAFIKA MATTAR
The Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan — Police foiled a bid to kill four American archaeologists and two Jordanians connected to an Al-Qaida-linked terrorist mastermind have been charged with formulating the plot, security officials said Wednesday.

Jamil Mohammed Kutkut, 27, and Ibrahim Mohammed Zein al-Abadeen, better known by Jihad al-Qashab, 36, were charged with plotting to carry out terrorist acts, illegal possession of automatic weapons and infiltrating Jordanian territories.

No details were available on the Americans who were the targets of the plot, which was foiled after police arrested Kutkut on Oct. 17. Al-Abadeen remains at large after allegedly fleeing to Syria.

Jordanian prosecutor's issued the charges recently, but it was unclear when.

Officials said both men are suspected of belonging to Kata'eh al-Tawhid, Arabic for "Battalions of Monotheism," a Jordanian terror group headed by militant Abu-Musab al-Zarqawi and linked to al-Qaida. Al-Zarqawi also heads the al-Qaida in Iraq group and is wanted for involvement in numerous attacks against U.S. and Iraqi security forces.

A charge sheet drawn up by Jordanian prosecutors alleges al-Abadeen approached Kutkut to carry out a military attack against four American archaeologists working in the town of Hartha, near Irbid, 55 miles north of the capital, Amman.

Kutkut allegedly accepted the mission, caused the

area and a school where the archaeologists lived and gave al-Abadeen a Kalashnikov automatic weapon with ammunition, which he hid in the garden of a house where he was being harbored.

But al-Abadeen allegedly fled to Syria because he was wanted by Jordanian authorities in connection with another foiled plot involving al-Zarqawi and 10 other terror suspects to carry out chemical and conventional attacks in Jordan, the charge sheet said.

It was unclear when al-Abadeen went to Syria and when the trial against both him and Kutkut would begin. If convicted, both men could face life in prison.

Jordan's military prosecutor has charged another four men with plotting to attack security officials, along with foreign and Israeli terrorists, in Jordan, and illegal possession of an automatic weapon.

Police arrested Suleiman Sheikh-Abi, 28, and his cousin Omar Sheikh-Abi, 26, Riyadh Abu-Duhelieh, 29, and Ahmad Abu-Qatmeih, 51, in August and September. No further details were available, including when they will face trial.

Jordan is a key Arab ally of the United States and a peace partner to Israel, but has been targeted by al-Zarqawi, al-Qaida and other terrorists. Twenty-two Islamic militants, including al-Zarqawi, were convicted of plotting to attack U.S. and Israeli troops during the kingdom's millennium celebrations.

Al-Zarqawi, 38, is believed to be directing anti-U.S. attacks and kidnappings in Iraq, and his group has been holding several hostages. He was sentenced to death for the October 2002 killing of U.S. aid worker Laurence Foley in Jordan.

Man survives beyond-lethal blood-alcohol level

SOFTIA, Bulgaria — Incredible doctors made five blood tests on a drunken man to confirm he had a blood-alcohol content of 0.914, far above the usual life-threatening range, police and doctors said Tuesday.

The 67-year-old man, whose name was not released, was hospitalized Dec. 20, when a car knocked him down on a street in the southern Bulgarian city of Plovdiv. A breath test showed high blood alcohol level, but police officers thought the result was inaccurate, because the man was conscious and talked with them, said Col. Angel Rangelov, head of police in Plovdiv.

Berlusconi forgives tourist

ROME — Premier Silvio Berlusconi telephoned the Italian tourist who struck at him in a busy piazza on New Year's Eve, ensuring him of forgiveness and reassuring the man's worried mother that he would not press charges, a report said Tuesday.

The tourist, a 28-year-old Italian bricklayer, hit Berlusconi in the head with a camera tripod in Rome's Piazza Navona, bruising his neck. Roberto Dal Bosco insisted at his hearing that he only meant to poke the tripod in Berlusconi's direction to impress some young women with him, news reports have said.

Plant too big for greenhouse

OSLO, Norway — For 30 years, the Botanical Gardens in Oslo has nurtured a giant Agave sisalana plant, dreaming of its spectacular once-in-a-lifetime blossoming.

Now botanists fear what they wish for: The more than 16-foot plant, also called Sisal hemp, is too big for its greenhouse, and is threatening to burst through its glass roof.

"The blossoming is such an expansive affair for this species that we may have to cut it down before it gets that far," museum botanist Brita Stedje told national broadcaster NRK Tuesday. "It is sad, but we just don't have room."

From wire reports

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U.S. isn't 'stingy'

The attack on President Bush from CNN and the rest of the left leaning media is really hurtful... and a shame.

To accuse the United States of being stingy is a character attack that is, if nothing else, unfair! The United States is generous to a fault when it comes to a disaster anywhere in the world, regardless of the political bent of a country.

I might add that when we had our own disaster from hurricanes a few months ago in Florida and Louisiana I do not recall C-54s landing with blankets and water from other countries. It was our disaster and we were, as usual, on our own.

Richard H. Freese
Stuttgart, Germany

Smoke-free needed

There are many of us overseas who like playing the slot machines. It's our personal choice, just like smoking is an individual's personal choice. However, the non-smokers are made to suffer, it's as if they are being punished for not smoking.

Someone needs to do a walk-through of the Morale Welfare and Recreation club facilities and note the small areas they have for nonsmokers versus smokers. At the Mannheim Top Hat club, they have four or five machines for the use of nonsmokers and about 40 for smokers. This room is the only room in the club that you can smoke in, so people from the ballroom and restaurant area use this room. Pipe and cigar smokers, it's absolutely horrible. Second-hand smoke skills, and just because you have a love for playing the slots, why should we be penalized?

Realizing that some of these guys are fighting a war and smoking should be secondary, they will be no good to us with cancer. It has been my experience that if a person has difficulty saying to smoke that cigarette, they eventually give it up.

I request the U.S. Army Europe commander and the MWR chief look at the smoking policy closely again and make our facilities smoke-free.

Barrbara Smith
Wiesbaden, Germany

Thanks for improving Taj

Into my eleventh month in Iraq, and being a faithful reader of the letters section, it occurred to me that I couldn't remember the last time anyone had anything nice to say about Taj.

In spring 2004, people would come to you sympathetic looks and comments when you told them you were going to Taj. Compared to pretty much everywhere else, this place was the pits. What our predecessors hadn't blown to total smithereens was taken over by many dogs, littered with unexploded ordnance or flooded with black water. Throw in rocket attacks, and this was another world compared to what most

Tell us what you think

Stars and Stripes welcomes your comments on editorials and columns that are published in the newspaper, and values letters on topics of importance in the lives of our readers. All letters must be signed, and must include the writer's address or base and telephone number. Please limit all letters to 300 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, taste and clarity.

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people were calling "home" around Baghdad.

It's a completely different story now. Of all the forward operating bases I've been in to the Baghdad area of responsibility, this one has more going for it—including the palatial digs of the Multinational Force. It didn't just "happen," nobody came in and fixed it for us. We did it: the Readiness Management Systems and KBR civilians, the contracting officers, the engineers who changed the physical landscape, the unit leaders who were both the rubber and the road, the local nationals and local contractors, the logies and money counters at 1st Cavalry Division and III Corps who funded our dreams, Army and Air Force Exchange people, and the general officers who supported our requests for funding and provided the emphasis to get through tremendous burocracies. There were many who said these things would never happen—none of it was easy and it had to be done while fighting in combat. Yes, it was hard, very hard.

We continue to improve and now people are going to ask how they can get posted at Taj. Perhaps few will appreciate what went into those huge efforts, but before I get out of here, I just want you to know that some of us will never forget it. Thank you!

Lt. Col. Christopher A. Joslin
Taji, Iraq

Media can help win war

To watch the media and read the papers over the past two years, one would get the distinct impression that no amount of military might can win the war in Iraq.

All of our soldiers are in constant danger everywhere in country. Coalition veterans over the years (save the highly successful assault on Fallujah) are few and are so insignificant that they aren't worth reporting.

Even when victories are reported, the reporting tends to concentrate on negative

aspects of the battle (i.e. U.S. losses, or the amount of insurgents who escaped).

It's been some time since I saw a newspaper headline that listed something other than U.S. deaths. I want to congratulate Stars and Stripes and The Associated Press for publishing an article ("U.S. troops kill 25 insurgents in Mosul," Dec. 31/Jan. 1) that shows a battle with insurgents in a relatively positive light.

If there were more articles like this, public opinion about the war would be very different from what it is right now. I believe that if there had been more articles like this when the insurgency was just starting, it would be nowhere near as strong as it is now.

The insurgents gain information from newspapers and television. It's a simple and effective way of finding out how successful their attacks are—as well as finding potential weaknesses to exploit, not to mention a useful recruiting tool for the insurgents.

If the media instead concentrated on how ineffective the insurgent attacks usually are, concentrated on enemy losses instead of coalition losses, and quit violating operations security, then the insurgents would have a much harder time finding recruits and funding.

The media can play an active role in winning this thing, and it wouldn't be that hard to do. Getting on our side of the fight would probably make people trust the media more, as well.

Sp. Ken Warner

Logistics Support Area Anaconda, Iraq

Clemency for GI scrummers

I am appalled by what I've read concerning Maj. Kathy Caus and her soldiers' conviction at a court-martial for scrumming ("Why not hold Rumsfeld to same standard?" — Trudy Rubin column, Dec. 27). She and her soldiers made the right decision to accomplish the mission, who was in charge of the legal team that charged her and her soldiers? They are the ones who should be put up on charges for stupidity.

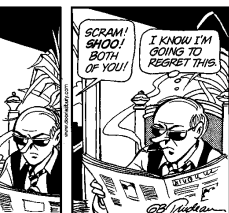
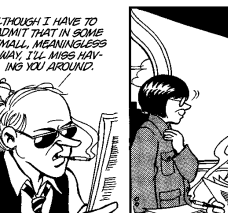
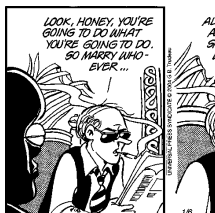
I served in Iraq in 2003 and was maintenance chief for one of the largest maintenance detachments in the country. Abandoned and damaged vehicles were everywhere. One of our tasks was to retrieve them. Then we scrounged whatever we could from these unserviceable vehicles to maintain the ones the units needed to accomplish their mission. If the vehicles were abandoned by units headed north, then they had what they needed to complete their mission or they would not have left them behind.

All I can do is compliment Kaus on good judgment and a job well done in accomplishing her mission. I agree with the accountors who want all of these fine men and women to receive clemency.

Marine Master Gunnery Sgt. (A.R.)
Nichols (retired)
Camp Kinser, Okinawa

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Doonesbury Flashbacks



OPINION

Here's what's wrong with Social Security

BY JAMES K. GLASSMAN

Scripps Howard

We have tried to frame a law which will give some measure of protection to the average citizen and his family against ... poverty-ridden old age," said Franklin Roosevelt as he signed the Social Security Act on Aug. 14, 1935.

Those are noble, heartfelt sentiments for a difficult period but, as 2005 begins, it's time to face facts: Social Security stinks. Government may owe a measure of protection to retirees, but this is a terrible way to provide it.

Social Security is an absurd anachronism — and most people under 50 know it and want something better. By its 70th anniversary, the system must get the restructuring it desperately needs.

Begin with the obvious. Social Security is a Ponzi scheme headed for collapse. It is a pay-as-you-go program. Taxes from working Americans go directly into the pockets of retired Americans. (There's a tiny bit left over for a so-called "trust fund," which will soon be depleted.) Initial retirees scored big, as early winners who are bait for any Ponzi. The very first recipient, Ida May Parker, paid in \$44 and collected benefits of \$20.93.

Times were different. In the 1930s, there were 11 workers per retiree; today, the ratio is 3-to-1; in 20 years, it will be an untenable 2-to-1.

The life expectancy of a newborn in 1929 was 57; today, it's nearly 80. Americans are now far more likely to live long enough to get benefits, and they'll be paid those benefits much longer, starting at age 62. Meanwhile, the growth of the work force is slowing, and benefits are rising because of a generous formula.

The traditional remedy to this imbalance is to increase taxes on workers or cut the benefits of retirees, or both. But we've come to a point where such an approach will inspire both workers and retirees to throw up their hands and say, "Enough of this nonsense."

Instead, the obvious long-term solution is for Americans to fund a larger part of their own retirements — just as they pay for their own food and clothes and shelter. That way, they won't have to worry whether there are enough workers to pay their bills when they retire.

They'll pay their own bills out of their savings.

You would think, from the bleatings of interest groups, that self-funded retirements are lousy and radical. An upcoming newspaper ad from the AARP will show a couple saying, "If we feel like gambling, we'll play the slots."

But saving for retirement is no more gambling than buying a home — which is something that 68 percent of Americans do very well. Going deeply into debt to purchase real estate is a far bigger risk than building a retirement account between your 20s and 60s. Currently, 42 million U.S. workers own a 401(k) plan and manage it pretty well. The average annual return for the 10 years ending in 2002 was 6.4 percent, compared with 6.8 percent for professionally managed pension plans, according to Watson Wyatt Worldwide.

After inflation, the average return on a 401(k) was about 4 percent. A study by the Social Security Administration projects, with generous assumptions, that middle-income workers born in the past 30 years can expect returns of just 1.5 percent to 2 percent from Social Security. A study by the Na-



tional Center for Policy Analysis found that for a single black man entering the work force today, it will be 0.9 percent.

That's a crime. Since 1926, the average annual return for a conservative portfolio split 50-50 between Treasury bonds and a stock-market index has been 8 percent; after inflation, 5 percent. A reasonable approach to restructuring Social Security would guarantee current benefits for retirees and let other Americans take half of what now goes to payroll taxes and put it into a 401(k)-style personal retirement account, retaining a thinner pay-as-you-go layer — which, as the program showed its success, would eventually be phased out.

What's the role of government here? To make contributions to such accounts mandatory, keep choices sound and sensible, and postpone withdrawals — so the rest of us don't have to rescue the profligate and the unlucky from what FDR called "poverty-ridden old age."

Americans deserve to own their own retirement accounts, which they can use as seniors and later pass on to their kids, church or charity. It's patronizing — and, with the current condition of Social Security, dangerous — to pretend otherwise.

James K. Glassman is a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute and host of the Web site TechCentralStation.com.

Post-Rehnquist speculation hints at what's at stake

At dinner not long ago with a group of Washington insiders, a mix of conservative Republicans and moderate Democrats, I was assured there he several of my companions

Dan Thomasson



and what is more, some of those closest to the situation opined that it would happen.

Talk about waving red flags in front of bulls. I said incredulously, and was promptly reminded about who won the presidential election and with whose help. The attitude from my conservative dinner companions was one of resolve to do what they pleased. A few Democratic senators sitting next to me shrugged and muttered something about being the way of political victors — rape, burn and pillage, he grinned.

With Rehnquist's health so precarious that he may never return to the bench, the chances are the next biggest fight outside of Iraq will take place over his replacement before the New Year is terribly old.

Liberals already are girding for that battle, clogging the Internet with somewhat hysterical warnings that the nation faces impending doom unless all forces are brought to bear against the Philistines of the Right.

At the top of their list of concerns is abortion, with emotional issues about flags and gay marriage and schools and religion in public life close behind.

From a numbers standpoint, they have a right to worry. Several justices are in their 70s or 80s and could retire during the next four years, giving social conservatives the opportunity they have been waiting for almost since the days of Chief Justice Earl Warren — a court where the balance is heavily tilted their way. But why Scalia, a brilliant but inscible ideologue whom liberals despise and whose ethics have been challenged of late, or Thomas, who seems generally to follow Scalia's lead and whose opinions have never been considered particularly noteworthy in style or substance? Those who follow the court closely note that Scalia's nomination to head the court would

please President Bush's conservative base like no other. There is little question that elimination or substantial modification of Roe v. Wade would be at the top of the agendas if either Scalia or Thomas were selected and approved. Thomas, who maintains a low profile in public, has a loyal following and, according to court watchers, is well-liked by his fellow justices.

Probably unfairly, he has never been popular among his fellow blacks largely because of positions on issues like affirmative action that they believe are detrimental to their welfare. He simply doesn't fit the political profile blacks assume is best for them.

Either of these justices could be expected to face enormous opposition in the confirmation process. Scalia, for instance, would be subjected to rigorous questioning about his connections to the White House and his re-

fusal to recuse himself from a case involving Vice President Cheney, who has been a hunting partner. Thomas, whose life was changed dramatically by confirmation hearings for his original nomination to the court, might think twice about going another round in a Senate that allowed outlandish, silly and made-up accusations about sexual harassment in the work environment.

Whoever is nominated can be expected to lead the court away from the center toward a strict constructionism in interpreting the Constitution. We can only hope that Americans won't be treated to another offensive spectacle of the Thomas variety no matter who is nominated.

Liberals should conduct themselves far more decorously than they have. But don't bet on it; for them, the stakes are too high.

Dan Thomasson is former editor of the Scripps Howard News Service.

Mallard Fillmore



UNIVERSITY FACULTY-
LIVING COMMITTEE MEMBER:
"I RESOLVE TO CRUSADE
FOR DIVERSITY...
OF SKIN TONE
BUT NOT OF PHILOSOPHY...
I WANT FOLKS OF ALL RACES...
FROM ALL SORTS OF
PLACES..."



BY BRUCE TINSLEY

Tourism push

GA EPWORTH — With a \$150,000 government grant, officials from Tennessee, North Carolina and Georgia are working on a strategy to improve the tourism appeal of their region.

Officials from Georgia's Fannin County, Cherokee County in North Carolina and Polk County in Tennessee make up the Three Corners Economic Development Partnership. One of their first orders of business during a meeting last month was to rename the group "Three Corners" instead of Southern Appalachian Partnership.

"This part of the country, which ends up as a wonderful day trip from Atlanta or Chattanooga, wants to change its image," said Beth Jones of the Southeast Industrial Development Association, based in Chattanooga, Tenn.

'First baby' twice

MA ATTLEBORO — Kelsey Rose Gavel and her sister Rory Ann have a flair for the dramatic.

Born a year apart, they've made their parents repeat winners of the "first baby" contest at Study Memorial Hospital in Attleboro.

"It was so shocked that it actually happened the second year in a row — no planning, no nothing," mom Terri Gavel, 30, told The Sun Chronicle of Attleboro. "It's a little weird right now still."

Kelsey was born 9:37 p.m. on New Year's Day. Rory Ann was born 12:16 a.m. Jan. 2, 2004.

As contest winners, Terri and Mike Gavel, 36, receive a variety of gifts donated by the newspaper, the hospital and local businesses.

Both girls arrived before their dad's duties. Rory Ann arrived six days early, while Kelsey was a day early.

Catholics want gays out

CA COSTA MESA — Some parents and parishioners have accused the Roman Catholic diocese in Orange County of violating church doctrine by allowing a gay couple to enroll their children in a church school.

The group demanded that St. John the Baptist School in Costa Mesa accept only families that pledge to abide by Catholic teachings, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Church doctrine opposes gay relationships and adoption by same-sex couples.

School officials rejected the demand, and issued a new policy stating that a family's background "does not constitute an absolute obstacle to enrollment in the school."

The Rev. Gerald M. Horan, superintendent of diocese schools, said that if Catholic beliefs were strictly adhered to, then children whose parents divorced, used birth control or married outside the church would also have to be banned.

Custody battle of boy

FL JACKSONVILLE — A 3½-year-old boy at the center of a three-way custody battle was handed over to his biological mother, leaving the couple who had been raising him since his



birth in tears.

Evan Scott's birth mother, Amanda Hopkins, who had won a court battle, picked up the boy for a "transitional visit" to his new home. Hopkins lives on a military base in Illinois when he and his husband and infant daughter.

Dawn and Gene Scott, who have cared for the boy since his birth in May 2001, are still seeking to overturn a judge's order denying them custody.

Hopkins and the boy's father, Steven A. White Jr., never married, and she did not learn she was pregnant until she sought medical treatment for injuries suffered when she was assaulted in the residence they once shared, court documents show. Hopkins supported the Scotts' adoption of Evan until it appeared the court might grant White's request for custody.

Hard times for owls

MN MINNEAPOLIS — The patient doesn't have a name. He has a number: 704. But he could be called Blue for his new blue beak.

Blue broke his beak somehow, probably running into a car as he swooped to the ground to catch a mouse.

Experts at the University of Minnesota's Raptor Center repaired it using state-of-the-art technology (don't try this at home): a combination of glue and baking soda. Blue also broke a leg pretty badly. It was splinted and is healing.

It's been a good year for owl enthusiasts, a tough year for Blue and other great gray owls. Their food supply (mice and other rodents) disappeared from the Canadian forests where they live,

perhaps because the vegetation that rodents eat dried up. The owls went south looking for food, and hundreds landed in northern Minnesota.

Lucky leaper

FL ORLANDO — A teenager fell six stories after trying to leap from one parking garage to another, but suffered only a broken shoulder and other fractures.

Timothy Bargfrede, 18, of Longwood, and a friend realized they were at the wrong parking garage, so the friend jumped from one roof to the other, about a 2½-foot leap, Orlando police Lt. Orlando Rolon said.

Bargfrede fell when he tried to jump, and became wedged six stories down between the two buildings. Firefighters had to cut through the concrete to free him, Rolon said.

"He's very lucky to be alive," said his father, Tim Bargfrede.

Politics of flight

CO EAGLE — More than two dozen businesses are pledging cash if Eagle County agrees to subsidize a direct flight from Chicago to this mountain resort area. The county already guarantees flights from Denver and Dallas, putting up \$450,000 to cover any losses the airlines suffer. Some county commissioners worry that a Chicago flight would draw passengers away from the other two flights.

Graveside snatchers

TN MEMPHIS — Police have charged two teenagers with stealing purses from the cars of visitors to a cemetery.

Juvenile authorities were holding Michael Bonie and Donald Watkins, both 16. They were charged with two counts each of burglarizing vehicles and one count each of theft under \$500.

Police were looking for two other juveniles in hopes of clearing more of the dozen thefts of purses from cars at the cemetery in December alone.

Gay partner's benefits

RI PROVIDENCE — In what could be the first case of its kind in Rhode Island, the Tiverton School Committee has asked a Newport County Superior Court judge to decide the legality of a retired employee's request to extend health coverage to her same-sex spouse.

The School Committee requested clarification from the courts after Cheryl McCullough, who worked as a health teacher and guidance counselor at Tiverton High School for 27 years, applied for health insurance for Joyce Boivin, whom she married in their home state of Massachusetts nearly seven months ago.

Unsure whether Rhode Island recognizes same-sex marriages, committee members voted in October to seek declaratory judgment. Judge Stephen Fortunato could make a ruling soon.

The school board filed papers with the court saying it had "taken the position that defendant Boivin is not entitled to health-care benefits from the Tiverton School Department as the 'spouse' of defendant McCullough."



Blinded by the light

The setting sun shines on a snow-covered field outside Oswego, N.Y.



Heading home

Steven Duffy of Belvidere, Vt., shoulders his auger as he heads home after a day of ice fishing at St. Albans Bay on Lake Champlain in St. Albans, Vt.



Revolutionizing warfare

Re-enactors dressed as American forces march down Warren Street in downtown Trenton, N.J., to re-enact the Battle of Trenton, which took place in 1776.



Walking on water

Julia Anne Webber, left, and Susie Rogers jump from rock to rock as they walk across Aldridge Creek in Huntsville, Ala.



Juneau, that's really big

Darlene Young, left, and Gary Paglierani, from Fresno, Calif., who are touring southeast Alaska, admire a mushroom-shaped iceberg on Mendenhall Lake in Juneau, Alaska. The big berg may deteriorate soon, with forecasts calling for rain and above-freezing temperatures.



Water hazard

The wind shifts water from a fountain as Ted Neal retrieves his ball from the 18th hole while playing golf with his son, Scott Neal, in Fort Smith, Ark.



Keeping dry

Jerry Bedard wears a plastic bag to keep dry during a storm in Las Vegas. Heavy rain and snow have pounded the Western states in recent days.



Jetting around

Paul Hopkins flies his Eurofighter Typhoon, a remote-controlled airplane powered by a turbine engine, during the annual Tangerine Air Show in Apopka, Fla.

Cashing in on rare snow

TX BROWNSVILLE — Some South Texans are hoping to turn a rare snowfall into some cold cash.

A 23-year-old Brownsville man has put a three-pound snowball he collected during an unprecedented Rio Grande Valley Christmas snowfall on the eBay auction block.

Brownsville received 1.5 inches of snow Christmas Eve night and Christmas morning, its first measurable since Feb. 14, 1895, according to the National Weather Service.

"It's an amazing historical event," seller Oscar J. Garza told The Brownsville Herald. "They've been selling so much stuff on eBay I thought I'd get a good laugh and if I make a little money out of it, oh well. That's why I put a 'buy it now' price of \$5,000."

Coral reef discovery

FL ST. PETERSBURG — Marine researchers have discovered the deepest coral reef ever found in the United States in about 250 feet of water off the Florida coast.

The discovery in the Gulf of Mexico was announced last month by the U.S. Geological Survey.

It was tentatively identified as a coral reef in 1999 by a team from the University of South Florida. But it took several more years of research to confirm it as a living reef that depends on light filtering down from the surface.

Kansas City killings

MO KANSAS CITY — After a drop in homicides in 2004, Kansas City began 2005 with five people shot to death over a 30-hour period. Two more shooting victims were seriously wounded.

Last year the city reported 91 homicides, down from 93 in 2003.

Police said there were no apparent connections among the four shootings.

One victim, Jeffrey B. Dunham, 24, was shot to death Jan. 1 outside a nightclub while standing behind a friend who had gotten into an argument earlier in the evening.

Later that night, a man was found shot to death on the porch of a home. The next day, police found one person shot to death and another critically wounded.

A little over an hour later, police found three people shot inside a car, two of them fatally.

Huge painting homeless

NC WINSTON-SALEM — A businessman is trying to find a permanent home for a six-ton painting of the Battle of Gettysburg which has rarely been exhibited in recent years because of its immense size.

The painting, known as a cyclorama because it provides a 360-degree view of a scene when mounted in a cylinder, was one of four created by French artist Paul Philippoteaux in the 1880s. One cyclorama is on display in Gettysburg, and two others were lost.

The painting was done on 14 panels, which were later joined to measure 376 feet long and was roughly the height of a five-story building. What remains is considerably smaller — 365 feet long and 27 feet high. North Carolina artist, Joe King, spent the next 30 years un-

successfully trying to find a home for it. He left the painting to Wake Forest University in 1996 when he died.

Now the mission has become that of businessman Ken Wilson, King's longtime friend. Wilson said he could see the cyclorama becoming part of a museum display, traveling exhibit or theme-park attraction.

Finding hope in a bottle

RI PROVIDENCE — When Diane Flynn's doctor told her that breast cancer had returned and spread to her lymph nodes and her left lung, Flynn began a grueling chemotherapy treatment.

One day, while she was hooked up to an intravenous line in Rhode Island Hospital, a woman, Diane Gregoire, handed her a glass bottle decorated with strips of green and yellow clay.

"This is a Bottle of Hope," Gregoire said. "Once a week, she takes empty medicine bottles and turns them into art with cancer survivors at Rhode Island Hospital's Comprehensive Cancer Center."

"Every time I see one of my friends makes a bottle, I feel that they all make it to the right patient," Gregoire said.

Flynn, 53, said the bottle helped her through a weeklong stay in the hospital.

"I kept it by my side. At 3 a.m., all I had was hope. I believe there was a miracle in this bottle," she said.

When she returned home her doctor changed the diagnosis and told her the tumors were treatable.

Weighing in on change

HI HONOLULU — Some people returning their beverage containers to claim nickel deposits were surprised to find their cans and bottles being weighed instead of counted.

Consumers have been paying a five-cent deposit on each container, and they expected each container to be counted when they brought the empty cans and bottles to redemption centers.

But Reynolds Recycling said that in an effort to speed the process, the state is allowing refunds to be based on the weight of the containers.

However, consumers returning fewer than 50 containers can request a count.

A long line developed at an Oahu redemption center at Moiliili, the only such center from Nuuanu to Hawaii Kai.

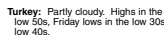
Three hours before the posted closing time, the center ran out of money, and late-arriving consumers had to be turned away.

Consumers began paying the five-cent deposit in November, but have been unable to receive their deposits returned until now.

Prosecutor fired

OH CINCINNATI — Hamilton County's new prosecutor fired the assistant prosecutor who accused his predecessor of sexual harassment. Joe Deters, the former state treasurer, said he fired Rebecca Collins because he felt she was a distraction for the prosecutor's office. Collins sued former Prosecutor Mike Allen in August, a day after he held a news conference to say he had an affair with a female lawyer in his office.

Stories and photos from wire services



The map shows the North Atlantic region with latitude lines from 0° to 80°N and longitude lines from 0° to 100°W. A high-pressure system (H) is located in the lower-left quadrant, and a low-pressure system (L) is in the upper-right quadrant. Fronts are indicated by lines with symbols: cold fronts (line with triangles), warm fronts (line with semicircles), and stationary fronts (line with alternating triangles and semicircles). Weather patterns are indicated by shading and symbols: sun for sunny, clouds for partly cloudy, and various textures for flurries, snow, and ice. A legend at the bottom defines these symbols.

LEGEND:

- WINDS:** Flurries, Snow, Ice
- FRONTS:** COLD, WARM, STATIONARY
- WEATHER:** Sunny, Pt. Cloudy, Cloudy

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every Saturday to find
Realtors at your new station.

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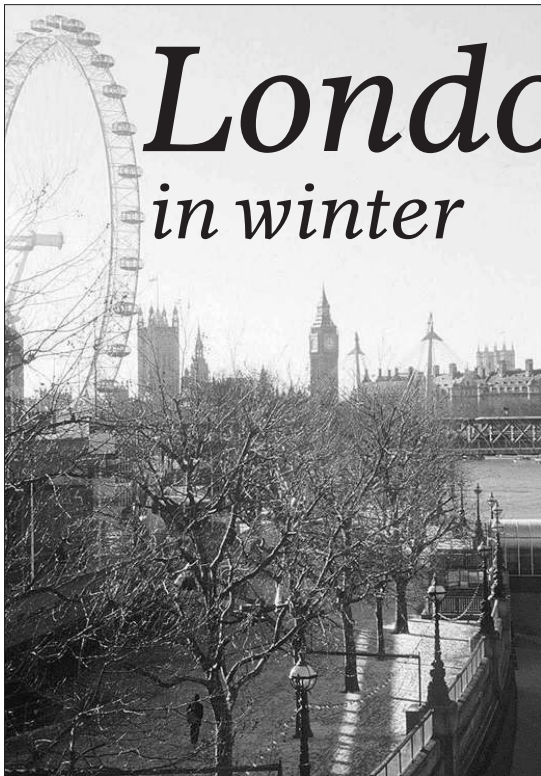
Stripes Travel



You'll need your brolly most days, but you can still have fun

BY ANNE CHALFANT
Contra Costa Times

We love London because it's so indelibly British. I love London, and head there annually in January or February for off-season advantages. Yes, you have to take your "brolly" with you, but then again, I prefer London with a Dickensian gray cast to the skies. Alas, there was also a Dickensian aspect to my face this trip as I pressed my nose forlornly against shop windows, eyeing goodies I deemed priced beyond my means while the pound is giving the dollar a pounding. Even without shopping, the pounds disappeared like water when a mere two glasses of house wine set me back \$30. Thus I resolutely rerouted



Above, winter in London means a Dickens-like gray cast to the skies, and streets wet from chilly rain. Top left: The Clock Tower (Big Ben) looks majestic after an early snowfall in Parliament Square.

myself to inexpensive prowling, taking the tube and walking all over the city. Happily, London is an endless museum for free exploration, with antiquarian bookstores and open markets and centuries-old architecture to marvel at. I discovered the Saturday antique market in Covent Garden, I window-shopped the latest Lon-

don fashion; I stopped at the Cornish Pasty shop; and I kept an eye out for the always-amusing Briticisms, like a sign that said: "Cats eyes removed." No medieval torture here — just a warning that a road's reflective dots had been removed during construction. My traveling companions and I took in a free noontime concert

at St. Martin's-in-the-Field, a lovely church on Trafalgar Square with a 60-year history of free concerts. London's wondrous and plentiful museums are also free of charge. I made a run to the Tate Modern to see what was new; I love this welcoming wide-open art space set in a former power plant on the Thames.

And I did quite a bit of no-purchase browsing in Harrods, which may be a store but seems to me one of London's finest museums with its Egyptian room and fruity, flowery Della Robbia ceilings in its sumptuous food hall.

One tip for getting a good rate on cash when I needed it — stop by the VisitBritain Center at 1 Regent St. They don't charge a fee, easily saving \$5.

My compelling reason for visiting London in the off-season is theater. For London is a paradise with more than 100 shows playing, which can be downright cheap in the off-season. I took in nine.

American playwrights are popular in London, which is not to say Brits otherwise take a high view of American culture. Nowhere was that more obvious than in "Jerry Springer, the Opera," wildly popular with British audiences, who relish the stereotype of Americans as overweight, unmannerly simpletons who can't negotiate their way through their own lives, much less foreign policy.

I gave "Jerry Springer" 30 minutes, then its vulgarity propelled my relatively mannerly self out the door. I walked back to my hotel, one of many long walks through this entertaining town.

London tradition and history are upheld in a merrier way by London pubs. Pubs are always an appealing way to dredge yourself in local chatter, and even more appealing in the off-season, when either the cold or the rain sent me scuttling for the warm glow of the pub drew me in.

I noticed that some pubs are less smoky these days, some even with nonsmoking sections.

Another new twist is the "gastro-pub," a pub that has outgrown fish-and-chips fare and is now serving cuisine to match upscale restaurants, using an in-house chef.

The really new twist on the London food scene, though, is a return to traditional British food such as shepherd's pie, bangers and mash, and sticky toffee pudding, made with fresh local ingredients and serious attention to presentation. Even the toniest

SEE WINTER, PAGE 20



SEATTLE TIMES/KRT

Need a place to stay warm? Duck into the Tate Modern art museum, which links the heart of London with the Millennium Bridge over the Thames.

If you go

Getting around

- **From airports:** The Heathrow Express delivers you to London's Paddington Station in 15 minutes. The Gatwick Express delivers you to Victoria Station. Both leave frequently and are comfortable and convenient.
- **Inside London:** The tube, or Underground, is a safe, clean and cheap way to get around town. If you're really on a budget, hop a city bus for a spin through the sights.

Things to do

- **Walking:** Inexpensive daily London guided walks are listed in "TimeOut London," found in most hotel rooms.
- **Theater:** With more than 100 plays and musicals to choose from, this is theatergoers' heaven. And you can buy inexpensive tickets even for sold-out shows. Most theaters sell a limited number of tickets the day of the performance. Turned-in tickets will be sold, and some theaters sell standing-room tickets for a pittance, too. Call to find out when the box office puts turned-in tickets on sale.
- **On Leicester Square,** the half-price, same-day ticket booth sells just that. A good deal if you just want to see some shows — they'll have a variety of choices, though they might not be the top sellers.
- **For that favorite show,** if you haven't booked in advance, call the theater's box office the day of the show. Chances are good that in the off-season you'll score some tickets. Also, buy tickets at Keith Prowse at VisitBritain, 1

Regent St.

- **Go to the Natural History Museum, Brompton Road.** Open 6:30 a.m.-8 p.m. daily. Entrance is free.

- **Visit Blenheim Palace, Woodstock.** Eight miles north of Oxford. No. 20 buses run from Oxford Bus Station to Woodstock, stopping at the gate. Web site: www.blenheimpalace.com. Various special events are held at the palace.

- **Go to Harrods:** Even if you don't want to shop, just strolling around the store is a feast for the eyes. Harrods is as much a museum as it is a retailing center.

- **See the ceremony of the Keys, Tower of London.** Very small groups are allowed to witness this ceremonial locking of the keys to the Tower of London, which has taken place nightly for 700 years. Only written applications are reviewed; no e-mail or fax. Write The Ceremony of the Keys, HM Tower of London, London, EC3N4AB, England.

Where to stay

A good place on the Web to look for lodging deals is www.visitbritain.com. VisitBritain, the government tourist authority, doesn't list anything marginal.

- **Sofitel St. James, 6 Waterloo Place.** This business-class hotel, opened in 2002, has a great location near Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly Circus. The French run a snappy hotel in the building that was formerly Lloyd's Bank. Call (+44) (0) 20-7747-2200 or go to www.sofitel.com.
- **Durley House Hotel, 115 Sloane St., London.** If you can still afford to shop in London



Sir Winston Churchill's grave is surprisingly modest, located in a family burial plot at the cemetery of the tiny countryside Parish of St. Martin church in Bladon, not far from Oxford, England.

these days, this charming small hotel in Knightsbridge is close to Harrods and Harvey Nichols department stores. The small luxury hotel has 11 one-bedroom suites, and some two-bedroom

suites. Expect to pay luxury-hotel prices, but you'll be coddled. For reservations, call (+44) (0) 877-783-4600 or go to www.durleyhouse.com.

— CONTRA COSTA TIMES

WINTER, FROM PAGE 19
restaurants, including The Savoy's new Banquette, were dishing up tradition. After the fourth sticky toffee pudding, my pals and I deemed it our task to locate the best in the country.

It was not sticky toffee, but the scent of cinnamon wafting up the steps of St. Martins-in-the-Field, that drew us down the stairway to Café in the Crypt. This full-service cafeteria offered more than the delicious cinnamon apple crumble. The surprising find in a church basement is, in fact, part of a fund-raising trend in British cathedrals and churches; you can find relatively inexpensive cafes at Winchester Cathedral, St. Mary-Le-Bow church, St. James Piccadilly church and Southwark Cathedral.

Everybody's got to make a pound or two to maintain those crumbling old buildings, and dukes are no exception. The Duke of Marlborough opens his home, Blenheim Palace, to visitors, who picnic on the grounds of the country estate and admire this mini-Versailles with its baroque styling, period furnishings and splendid Flemish tapestries.

Blenheim is also the birthplace of Sir Winston Churchill, who treated himself to an unexpected early birth in the home of his grandparents. Later he did much of his writing here. A Churchill exhibit includes the room where he was born and an exhibit of some of his letters, and memorabilia, including his paintings and some Christmas cards Hallmark produced from them.

Churchill's grave is a short drive away in a touchingly simple family plot at the pretty little countryside Parish of St. Martin church in tiny Bladon. The church is so unassuming you have to walk up a short footpath to find it.

My friends and I had made a day of it, traveling to Woodstock by train where, out the windows, fields were glowing green. It may be winter in London, but that means rain and greenery, not snow.

Except on the night I was heading out to see a show at the National Theatre. I was going alone, and planned to take a cab, but suddenly, as I gazed out my hotel room window at the tower that houses Big Ben, big fat snowflakes drifted down.

Twenty minutes later, it became clear the bellman was having no luck hailing a cab, so I grabbed an umbrella and headed out, unsure of the direction and whether I would make curtain. I jogged through Trafalgar Square, where Londoners were hurrying along and laughing at the amazement of snow.

"Which way is the Strand?" I asked, and the Brits were helpful, as always.

It was a chilly, icy trot across the Waterloo Bridge over the Thames, but I felt exhilarated by the merry mood of the rushing crowd around me, and also because I had surprised myself by easily finding my way. It made me feel very much at home.

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Above: Pigeons once were commonplace in Trafalgar Square, but now they're banished.
Below: British Telecom has announced that it will no longer build the cast-iron red telephone boxes that have been a London fixture since the 1920s. Blame technology. Since eight out of 10 Brits use cell phones today, the phone boxes aren't cost-effective to make anymore.



Lost London

Familiar icons gradually disappear

BY GARY A. WARNER
The Orange County Register

Red double-decker buses. Black taxi cabs. Red phone boxes. The corner pub. A letter to the Times.

London icons, all. All in danger of going the way of trolleys, pigeons in Trafalgar Square and other once-common symbols of the city that have been swept into the dustbin of history.

In what seems like a culturally suicidal series of moves, London is ditching many of its most recognizable symbols. Go into a souvenir store and you'll find the little buses, cabs and phone boxes for sale to tourists. But finding the real thing on the street is becoming increasingly difficult.

The latest blow came with the announcement that the British capital will do away with the Routemaster, the curved-top double-decker bus with a driver in front and a conductor in the rear.

Friday, Sept. 3, was dubbed "Black Friday" by Routemaster enthusiasts after 94 of the classic buses were withdrawn in a single day.

The last 250 still in operation will be replaced next year by newer double-decker buses with a single front door and driver or, much to local dismay, European-style "bendy buses," long single-deck buses with a flexible joint in the middle.

Routemasters were considered too old, too unfriendly to elderly and handicapped riders, and dangerous to boot — too many riders had a tendency to step off while the bus was still moving. A few will be left in "heritage service" in touristy areas around sights like Buckingham Palace.

That's the fate of the once-ubiquitous red telephone boxes that in recent years have had to share public space with modern gray-and-glass models. Introduced in the 1920s, the "K series" cast-iron beauties could be found in every city and hamlet of the island nation.

The classic red K2 model, with its windowpanes and royal crest, was built specifically for London — it was considered too fancy and too fragile for the countryside.

Other models followed, with manufacturers simplifying the design over the years but leaving the basics of a bright red kiosk with windows and a heavy door to keep out noise and the elements. As late as early 2000, there were still about 140,000 red phone boxes in Britain. Now that number is down to about 60,000 and shrinking rapidly.

You'll most often find the old boxes in two places — touristy areas of London and other major cities, and the countryside where the British Telecom simply hasn't gotten around to yanking them out yet.

A cottage industry has grown to

feed the nostalgia for the classic callers. Companies buy up the discarded boxes, refurbish them and sell them for private home or business use. The going rate: about \$5,000.

The ax truly finally fell this year when British Telecom recently announced that it would stop making the cast-iron boxes altogether. In a world of cell phones, the boxes simply aren't cost-effective to produce anymore.

Eight out of 10 Brits use cell phones — twice the average of the States.

Along with red, the most famous color of London's iconography is black.

Black taxicabs are also a vanishing species in London. City officials a while back lifted the color ban, leading to cabs swathed in advertising, or painted odd colors.

Cabs were festooned with white and black spots to advertise the Disney movie "101 Dalmatians" a few years back and Day-Glo orange to tout low-cost air carrier Easyjet. A taxi queue that once looked like an automotive tuxedo line is now a hedgepodge of blaring hard-sell and garish promotion.

It's all enough to make you want to go to the pub for a drink, but that would just be depressing. More than half the pubs are owned by big chains, their homogenized interiors filled with gambling machines and blaring rock music.

Once upon a time it wasn't unusual to find all four corners of a London intersection housing a pub. Now there are fewer than 5,000 pubs in the entire city. More than 100 are closing each year, victims of rising rents and changing drinking habits.

The trend led the New Statesman magazine to recall a saying by the 1930s French poet Hilaire Belloc, who became a British citizen and pub devotee. "When you have lost your inns," Belloc wrote, "drawn your empty selves, for you will have lost the last of England."

Add in other recent news, there's evidence of an avalanche of banal modernism sweeping London and the rest of the United Kingdom:

• **Concorde:** Once touted as the epitome of British engineering, the supersonic airliner was permanently grounded last year by its only two customers: British Airways and Air France. In London,

one remains parked on the tarmac at Heathrow Airport, and a smaller-scale model sits in the roundabout at the airport entrance.

• **Jaguar:** Along with the Aston Martin that James Bond drove and the famed luxury Rolls-Royce and Bentley sedans, few British automobiles are as connected with Britain as the Jaguar. Ford bought the brand and recently announced it would close the last Jag plant in the United Kingdom.

• **Parliament:** British Prime Minister Tony Blair led the drive to strip hereditary peers — the lords, ladies, earls, dukes and such — of an automatic seat in the House of Lords.

• **Fox hunting:** Despite the largest demonstration in London history by supporters of countryside sports, Parliament has banned fox hunting, the blood sport whose riders in red coats and white breeches are one of the most lasting symbols of the landed gentry.

• **Tea:** No drink is as tied to a nation as tea is to the history of Britain. The launch of the



Stars and Stripes

empire into its "jewel" of India was predicated on bringing the leaf back to the mother country. Afternoon tea with sandwiches and scones is still a staple of any tourist visit to the country. But beginning in the 1990s, the British were spending more on coffee than tea for the first time in history.

So many attacks on British institutions normally would be fodder for that most drastic of British measures: a letter to the Times.

That is, if you can find one of the vanishing number of red cylindrical Royal Mail "pillar" boxes. But even if you do, in changing times, even the Times of London has changed.

After 216 years as a broadsheet, the newspaper announced this autumn that it had permanently ditched its wider formal attire for the decidedly down-market tabloid format — which is easier to read on the bus and subway, and cheaper to produce.

For many Londoners, the true Times — the one read by tut-tutting ex-colonials in their stodgy gentlemen's clubs off Pall Mall — disappeared years ago when tabloid king Rupert Murdoch bought it. The conservative media mogul, who also runs America's Fox News network and the New York Post, was best-known in Britain for his mass-market tabloid, the



ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER/KRT

The new style of double-decker bus, above, is replacing the Routemaster, the traditional curved-top model with a driver in front and an open platform in the rear. Routemasters are now considered too old, too unfriendly to elderly and handicapped riders, and dangerous, because too many riders had a tendency to step off while the bus was still moving.



The classy, classic black taxicab is also a vanishing species in London. Today most cabs are swathed in advertising or painted odd colors, including Day-Glo Orange.

Sun, which featured topless "Page 3 girls."

Maybe it's just a matter of time until London gets rid of all its icons.

Perhaps the queen should be casting a wary eye on the small but vocal cast of Republicans calling for an end to the monarchy.

It might seem ludicrous, but then so does a London with bendy buses, polka-dot taxicabs, gray phone boxes and chain pubs.

Where to see 'old' London

Buses

Routemasters can still be found on a few central London routes, especially those that pass Trafalgar Square or travel major tourist streets such as The Strand or the area around Marble Arch. Look for the rounded top and an open rear platform.

Visitors can also see the buses at the London Transport Museum, next to Covent Garden. Call (+44) (0) 20-7565-7299 or go to the Web at www.ltmuseum.co.uk.

For updates on the fate of the Routemaster, check out www.londonbuspage.com. Web sites advise those who want to make a plea for the preservation of the Routemaster to e-mail the mayor of London at mayor@london.gov.uk.

Black taxis

Taxis are still all over London, though you have to take what you get — whether it's one of the few classic all-black

cabs or one decked out with ads for the latest movie or soft drink. To read about the cabs, go to the Web site of the London Vintage Taxi Association at www.osfm.org/britishcabs.

Phone boxes

British Telecom's Web site is www.bt.com. One of the many companies selling the classic models is English Phone Boxes, www.englishphoneboxes.com.

Pubs

The Campaign for Real Ale is the leading group fighting pub closures and the increasing effect of chains. The group also champions breweries and pubs that continue to make and sell traditional British ales instead of homogenized national brands. Check the Web at www.camra.org.

A good book to help you find the best of the remaining traditional pubs is "The Good Pub Guide" by Alisdair Aird (Ebury Press, \$24.95), available online at www.amazon.com.

— GARY A. WARNER

Ski Clubs & Events

COMPILED BY KAREN BRADBURY Stars and Stripes

Stripes prints ski events as space allows. These are trips through mid February, but most groups have scheduled trips through the end of the season. Send listings by e-mail to travel@mail.estripes.osd.mil.

AVIANO SKI CLUB

Area: Northern Italy

Web: www.avianoskiclub.com

Telephone 0434 366 185 (Gloria Leonarduzzi, Vice President)

Trips: Jan. 14-17, Madonna di Campiglio, Italy, \$225; Jan. 28-30, Sella Ronda and Araba, \$150; Lake Bled, Slovenia, \$190.

FRANKFURT INTERNATIONAL SKI CLUB

Phone: 069-9720-3669

E-mail: info@fiscweb.org

Web: www.fiscweb.org

Trips: Jan. 7-9, Kitzbühel, Aus., 220 euros; Jan. 14-16, Aleschberg, Switzerland, 185 euros; Jan. 14-17, St. Anton, 1, Aus., 275 euros; Jan. 21-23, Davos, Switzerland, 285 euros; Jan. 28-30, Andermatt, Switzerland, 195 euros; Jan. 29, Schwarzwald, Germany, 40 euros; Feb. 4-8, Champoluc, Italy, 425 euros; Feb. 4-6, Adelboden, Switzerland, 265 euros; Feb. 11-13, Villars, Switzerland, 245 euros; Feb. 12-19, St. Veit, 1, Aus., 380 euros; Feb. 18-20, Verbier, Switzerland, 195 euros; Feb. 18-21, Crans-Montana, 265 euros.

GRAFENWÖHR SKI AND SNOWBOARDING CLUB

Phone: DSN 464-1560

E-mail: GRAFSKICLUB@hotmail.com

Trips: Jan. 13-15, St. Johann, Aus., price TBA; Feb. 17-25, Dolomites, Italy, price TBA.

HEIDELBERG INTERNATIONAL SKI CLUB

Phone: 06202-577-8422

E-mail: president@heidelbergski.com

Web: www.heidelbergski.com

Trips: Jan. 9-15, St. Veit, Aus., 380 euros; Jan. 14-17, Portes du Soleil, France, 275 euros; Jan. 14-17, Saas Fee, Switzerland, 230 euros; Jan. 28-30, Wengen, Switzerland, 225 euros; Feb. 4-6, Verbier, 1, Aus., 380 euros; Feb. 11-13, Crans Montana, Switzerland, 290 euros; Feb. 18-21, Bad Hofgastein, Aus., 325 euros; Feb. 18-21, Flims, Switzerland, 225 euros; Feb. 20-26, St. Veit, 1, Aus., 400 euros.

KAISERSLAUTERN SKI CLUB

Phone: 06303-4751

E-mail: carper@msn.com

Web: www.geocities.com/k_townskiclub

Trips: Jan. 14-17, Davos, Switzerland, 315 euros; Jan. 28-30, Wilde Kaiser, Aus., 145 euros; Feb. 11-13, Serfaus, Aus., 185 euros; Feb. 17-21, Chamonix, France, 420 euros.

LABER SKI CLUB

Area: Southern Germany, Austria, Northern Italy

Phone: CN 08822 9481 3100, DSN 440-2366

E-mail: President.Tim.Payne@natoschool.nato.int



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Sledgers kick up the snow as they try to stop on the slopes of Grindelwald, Switzerland. The resort offers sled rental and runs.

Web: www.natoschool.nato.int then select "NATO School Lodge & Community Club"

Address: NATO Recreation Center, Labor Ski Club, Unit 24503, APO AE 09172

Trips: Jan. 12, Brixen im Thale, Aus., Jan. 22, Lermoos, Aus.

MANNHEIM INTERNATIONAL SKI CLUB

Phone: 06206-75268

E-mail: boykinjan@hotmail.com

Web: http://skinfo.jp

Trips: Jan. 14-17, Portes du Soleil, 195 euros; bed and breakfast; Jan. 21-23, Grindelwald, Switzerland, 125 euros; Jan. 22-29, Kitzbühel, Aus., 330 euros; half-pension; Jan. 28-30, Lech/Zurs/St. Anton, Switzerland, 130 euros; Feb. 4-6, Portes du Soleil, 145 euros; Feb. 18-21, St. Anton, Aus., 180 euros, bed and breakfast.

PATCH SKI CLUB

Area: Stuttgart

Phone: DSN 430-5789

E-mail: info@psc-ski.org

Web: www.patchskiclub.org

Trips: Jan. 13-17, Saas Fee, Switzerland, 380 euros; Jan. 14-17, Kitzbühel, Aus., 300 euros; Siegi Il-St. Veit, Aus., 390 euros; Jan. 28-30, Zell am See, Aus., 205 euros; Feb. 4-6, Engelberg, Switzerland, 190 euros; Feb. 18-21, Jungfrau, Switzerland, 220 euros.

TANNENBAUM SKI CLUB

Area: Kaiserslautern Military Community, Eifel, Baunholler, Mannheim regions, Rheinland-Pfalz and Spangdahlem

E-mail: dave@tannenbaumskiclub.com

Phone: 06301-3478

Web: www.tannenbaumskiclub.com

Trips: Jan. 14-17, Chamonix, France, 250 euros; Jan. 14-17, Zell-am-See, Aus., 240 euros; Jan. 14-17, Crans-Montana, Switzerland, 240 euros; Jan. 30-Feb. 5, Siegi Il Week II (U drive), St. Veit-Apendorf, Aus., 375 euros; Feb. 4-6, Gstaad, Switzerland, 195 euros; Feb. 18-21, Verbier-Valleys, Switzerland, 210 euros; Feb. 18-21, Portes du Soleil, France, 245 euros; Feb. 18-21, Bad Gastein, Aus., 235 euros.

WESTFALZ INTERNATIONAL SKI CLUB

Area: Kaiserslautern Military Community

Web: www.westfalzskiclub.org

Phone: 06371-598537

E-mail: kdsowell@interquest.de

Trips: Jan. 14-17, Zermatt, Switzerland, 255 euros; Jan. 21-23, Jungfrau, Switzerland, 230 euros.

WÜRZBURG INTERNATIONAL SKI CLUB

Phone: 06109-115162

E-mail: wsiclub@hotmail.com

Web site: www.wsiclub.org

Trips: Jan. 14-17, Dolomites, Italy, 220 euros; Feb. 18-21, Verbier, Switzerland, 220 euros.

Outdoor Rec

BAUMHOLTER: Jan. 8, Black Forest, Feldberg, Germany, \$65 adult, \$45 child; Aus., \$315 Jan. 21-23, Interlaken, Switzerland, \$125 transport and equipment rental, hostel at \$25 a night, lift passes, 2 days for 72 euros, non-skiers welcome; Gastein, Aus., \$315 Jan. 29-30, Garmisch, Germany, \$195, DSN 485-7182.

DARMSTADT

Jan. 8, Engelberg, Switzerland, \$25 per person, transport only, price of lift tickets not included. DSN 346-6277

HANAU: Jan. 8, Engelberg, Switzerland, \$69 transport, price of lift tickets not included; Jan. 13-17, Dolomites, \$239 adult, \$199 child; Jan. 22-23, Black Forest, Germany, \$109 adult, \$89 child; Jan. 28-29, Kaprun, Aus., \$149 adult, \$99 child. DSN 322-6015 or CIV 06183-61015.

KAISERSLAUTERN: Jan. 8, St. Anton, Aus., \$55 adult, \$45 child; Jan. 12, Garmisch, Germany, \$55; Jan. 14-17, St. Anton, Aus., \$249 ice, equipment rental and 3 nights hostel; Jan. 15, Engelberg, Switzerland, \$55; Jan. 16, Feldberg, Germany, \$45; Jan. 21-23, Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland, \$149; Jan. 21-23, Jan. 22, Garmisch, Germany, \$45/\$35; Jan. 26, Oberstdorf, Germany, \$45/\$35; Jan. 28-30, Moritz, Switzerland, \$185; Jan. 29, Jungfrau, Switzerland, \$55/\$45; Feb. 4-6, Garmisch, Germany, \$179; Feb. 5, St. Anton, Aus., \$55/\$45; Feb. 9, Feldberg, Germany, \$45/\$35; Feb. 11-13, Laax-Flims, Switzerland, cost TBA; Feb. 12, Engelberg, Switzerland, \$55/\$45; Feb. 18-21, Lauterbrunnen, Switzerland, \$195; Feb. 19, Jungfrau, Switzerland, \$55/\$45; DSN 489-7751 or CIV 06133-536-7751.

KATTERBACH: Jan. 8 and 29, Feb. 12, day in Garmisch, Germany; Jan. 14-17, weekend in Austria; DSN 467-3225 or CIV 09802-8225.

MANNHEIM: Jan. 15 and 29, Feb. 5, \$50 plus lift; Jan. 8, 17 and 22, Feb. 5, 12 and 19, Feldberg, Germany, \$35 plus lift; Feb. 12, Single Soldier for 1 special to Feldberg (\$35 plus lift); Feb. 21, Feldberg, (\$25 plus lift); DSN 381-7215 or 381-7232; CIV 0621-730-7215.

SPANGDAHLEM: Jan. 7-9, Feb. 18-20, Gstaad, Switzerland, 300 euros, \$344 doubles, discount for children; Jan. 21-23, Feb. 11-13, DSN 452-7170 or CIV 06565-61-7176.

STUTTGART: Jan. 14-17, St. Gallenkirch, Aus., \$270 adult, \$190 ages 7-14, \$135 up to age 6; Jan. 23-30, Shonried, Switzerland, \$590 adult, \$295 children under 17; Feb. 3, Feldberg, Germany, \$30 with equipment, rental, \$15 without; Feb. 5, St. Gallenkirch, Aus., \$30 with equipment, rental, \$15 without; Feb. 18-21, St. Gallenkirch, price TBA. DSN 431-2774.

WERNZ: Jan. 8 and 29, Feb. 19, March 2 and 26, Oberereng, Italy; Jan. 15, Feb. 5, Sign up the Sunday before. DSN 634-7453.

WIESBADEN: Jan. 8, 15, 29, Feb. 12, Engelberg, Switzerland, \$45; Jan. 12, ski maintenance clinic; \$15; Jan. 14-16, Austria, \$355; Jan. 22, Engelberg, Switzerland, \$55; Jan. 22-23, Feldberg, \$175, DSN 337-5760 (Anderson Barracks) or DSN 334-5818 (Dexheim).

Calendar

COMPILED BY JAYNE TRAENDLY Special to Stars and Stripes

Information is the latest available at press time, but is subject to change. We recommend checking with the local tourist board for confirm details of the event before traveling.

AUSTRIA

www.austria.info

VIENNA: Flower Jan. 14; Technologists ball, Jan. 14; Economics University ball, Jan. 15; Vienna Philharmonic ball, Jan. 20; Army officers ball, Jan. 21; Pharmacists' ball, Jan. 22; Engineers ball, Jan. 27; Physicians ball, Jan. 29; Hunters ball, Jan. 31; Opera ball, Feb. 3; Viennese coffee house owners ball, Feb. 2; Bonbon ball, Feb. 4; Lawyers ball, Feb. 5; Rudolfini masked ball, Feb. 7; Johann Strauss ball, March 19; VIENNA: Dream on ice, Jan. 21; March 6. Ice skating at City Hall.

BELGIUM

www.visitbelgium.com
ANTWERP: Ice skating on market square, through Jan. 8
ANTWERP: Snow and ice sculpture festival, through Jan. 16
THROUGHOUT the country: Anniversary of 175 years of independence, through 2005
BRUSSELS, WALLONIA: Beer 2005, through 2005
BRUSSELS: Antiques show, Jan. 21-30
TOUR & TAXIS
STAYLOUT: Mid-Lent carnival, March 6
BINCHE: Carnival, Feb. 6-8
BRUSSELS: Festival of fantastic film, March 11-26
TOURNAI: Flower market, March 25

CZECH REPUBLIC

www.visitczechia.cz
PRAGUE: Easter markets, March 18-April 8
Old Town and Wenceslas Squares

DENMARK

www.visitdenmark.com
COPENHAGEN: Grand opening of the city's opera house, Jan. 15

ENGLAND

www.visitbritain.com
YORK: Stamp and coin fair, Jan. 14-15
LACEPOUR: Daily telegraph adventure travel and sports show, Jan. 14-16
SPALDING: Motorbike 2005, Jan. 15-16

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 26

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Alpine snow conditions as of December 31, 2004

Resort	Sno Depth inches	Piste Info		Resort Rans	Lifts Open	General Information
		ON	OFF			
Kaunertal, AUS	90/20	Excellent	Powder	Good	8/9	All measurements are in centimeters Resort conditions are looking positive
Mayrhofen, AUS	50/15	Good	Powder	Good	20/24	Great skiing due to recent snowfalls
Mayrhofen, AUS	120/20	Good	Varied	Good	20/24	Best conditions found on upper slopes
Pitzal, AUS	140/40	Good	Powder	Closed	1/7	Very good piste cond w/ 10cm new snow
Zell Am See, AUS	57/20	Good	Powder	Good	28/28	Conditions are superb w/ all lifts open
Chamonix, FR	120/40	Good	Powder	Good	44/47	Snow cond are good on upper runs
Les Deux Alpes, FR	110/50	Good	Varied	Good	52/54	Fresh snow is on piste, Good skiing avail.
Val d'Isere, FR	95/75	Excellent	Powder	Good	42/97	Excellent skiing on piste and resort runs
Garmisch-GER	120/35	Good	Varied	Good	23/47	Garmisch is looking nice, recent snow
Feldberg, GER	80/65	Good	Powder	Good	24/28	15cm of new snow making lovely cond
Corviglia, IT	120/50	Good	Powder	Good	44/49	Becoming packed but remain good
Livigno, IT	108/47	Good	Powder	Good	23/32	10 cm of fresh snow, all lifts open
Passo Tonale, IT	220/100	Good	Varied	Good	18/18	Best conditions found at top of piste
Engelberg, SW	110/35	Good	Powder	Good	24/25	New snow, helped slope conditions
Saas Fee, SW	70/40	Good	Powder	Good	51/52	Most lifts are open, great snow conditions
St. Moritz, SW	80/25	Good	Varied	Good	44/56	Good skiing/boarding throughout the area
Verbier, SW	65/25	Good	Powder	Good	34/36	On-slope condition good, fresh snow
Zermatt, SW	205/41	Good	Varied	Hard	24/30	Hard packed cond & some icy areas

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Outdoor Recreation Ski Schedule

Kaiserslautern Pulaski Barracks, 489-7751/8431-326-7751
Jan. 8 Ski Express, St. Arden, Austria

Darmstadt Garmisch-Partenkirchen 348-6277/8431-48-4277
Jan. 8 Skiing & Snowboarding Engelberg, Switzerland

Mannheim Taylor Barracks, 381-7215/8431-720-7215
Jan. 8 Skiing & Snowboarding Engelberg, Switzerland

Heidelberg Herkules Heavy Village 330-7402/8431-330-7402
Jan. 8 & Jan. 22 Engelberg, Germany

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CALENDAR, FROM PAGE 24

LONDON: Mime festival, **Jan. 15-30**.
 LONDON: Vivaldefrance, **Jan. 21-23**. French travel and lifestyle show in Olympia.
 LONDON: Vivo Espana, **Jan. 28-30**. Spanish travel and lifestyle show in Olympia.
 LONDON: Motorcycle show, **Jan. 29-Feb. 6**.
 LONDON: Daily Telegraph Destinations: Holiday and Travel Show, **Feb. 3-6**, Earls Court.
 LONDON: Chinese New Year celebrations, **Feb. 13**. Trafalgar Sq. and Leicester Sq.

FRANCE

www.france-tourism.com

PARIS: Annual winter store sales, **Jan. 12-mid-Feb.**
 DUNKERQUE: Carnival, **Jan. 15-26**.
 SARREGEIMINES (Lorraine): Carnival, **Jan. 21-28**.
 PARIS: Prêt à porter Paris, **Jan. 29-31**. International fair for women's fashion at Parc des Expositions de Paris.
 NYONS (Rhône-Alpes): Olive oil festival, **Feb. 5-6**.
 PARIS: Chinese New Year celebrations, **Feb. 9**. Place d'Italie.
 MULHOUSE: Carnival, **Feb. 12-13**.
 MENTON: Lemon festival, **Feb. 12-27**.
 NICE: Carnival, **Feb. 12-27**.
 BESANCON: Carnival, **March 12-14**.
 MARSEILLE: Carnival, **March 19**.

GERMANY

www.germany-tourism.de

MUNICH: Motorcycle show, **Jan. 21-23**.
 TOOTMOOS: Dog sled races, **Jan. 29-30**.
 SINHEIM: Motorcycle exhibition, **Feb. 2-13**.
 BERLIN: Motorcycle show, **Feb. 4-6**.
 KÖLN: Carnival parade, **Feb. 7**.
 DUSSELDORF: Carnival parade, **Feb. 7**.
 MAINZ: Carnival parade, **Feb. 10-12**.
 BERLIN: Film festival, **Feb. 10-12**.

ITALY

www.italiantourism.com

VERONA: Christmas critics in the arena, **through Jan. 25**.
 VENICE: Epiphany watches on the canal race, **Jan. 25**.
 VIAREGGIO: Carnival, **Jan. 23-Feb. 13**.
 VENICE: Carnival, **Jan. 28-Feb. 8**.

THE NETHERLANDS

www.holland.com/uk

APPELDORF: Midwinter marathon, **Jan. 29**.
 ROTTERDAM: Art Rotterdam, **Feb. 23-28**.
 LANDELUK: Carnival, **Feb. 22-26**.
 AMSTERDAM: Heise, **March 1-6**. Water sports fair.
 AMSTERDAM: AutoRAI, **Feb. 10-20**. International car show.
 BREDA: Antique show, **Feb. 24-27**.
 MAASTRICHT: European fine arts fair, **March 4-13**.

SCOTLAND

www.visitscotland.com

GLASGOW: Celtic connections, **Jan. 12-24**.
 LERWICK: Up helly a, **Jan. 25**. Festival of light and torch-tail parade.
 THROUGHOUT the country: Burns Night, **Jan. 25**.
 GLASGOW: Comedy festival, **March 10-26**.

SPAIN

www.tourspain.co.uk

SAN SEBASTIAN: Tamborada, **Jan. 19-20**.
 THROUGHOUT the country: Holy Week, **March 20-27**.

SWEDEN

www.visit-sweden.com

KIRUNA: Snow festival, **Jan. 27-30**. Biggest in Europe.
 JOCKMOKK: Winter market, **Feb. 3-6**. Lapp.

SWITZERLAND

www.switzerland-tourism.ch

BASEL: Coin fair, **Feb. 11-13**.
 GENEVA: Car show, **March 3-13**.

WALES

www.visitwales.co.uk

LLANRWYD WELLS: Roman festival, **Jan. 7-9**.
 CARDIFF: St. David's Day parade, **March 1**.

Volksmarch

Here are events sanctioned by the International Federation of Popular Sports (Internationaler Volkssportverband, or IVV) near U.S. military installations in Europe. Locations are noted in the local language when possible. Find more extensive lists on the Web at www.ivv.org.

Country/Town	Day(s) and Time(s)	Code	Km.	Starting Point	Award	Directional Reference
France						
Montoy Flanville	Sun 0700-1400	F	10	Salle Anthea	No award	E of Metz
Germany						
Alsberg	Sat & Sun 0730-1200	F	5 & 12	Rothschall	Beer mug	FRM, SE of Nürnberg
Bretzenheim	Sun 0800-1400	BFX	5 & 10	Sporthalle	B-medal	FRM, N of Bad Kreuznach
Burgstall	Thu 0730-1400	F	6 & 12	Gemeindehalle	Kitchen timer	BWS, SE of Stuttgart
Gräfenau	Thu 0800-1400	BFX	5 & 10	Sportzentrum	FRM, SW of Schwerfurt	
Gräfenau-Angstedt	Sat 1000-1500	F	6 & 11	Mehrzweckhalle	No award	THS, S of Erfurt
Gräfenau-Angstedt	Sat 1500-1700	PPT	6 & 11	Mehrzweckhalle	No award	THS, S of Erfurt
Heinrichshaus	Sat 1200-1500	BFX	5 & 10	Alte Turnhalle	B-medal	FRM, SE of Erfurt
Lahn/Trzgrund	Sat 0730-1430, Sun 0730-1230	F	5 & 10, 16	Wanderhalle	B-medal/Semi-truck	FRHO, N of Bamberg
Ludweiler	Sat & Sun 0700-1330	F	5 & 10	Wanderhalle	No award	SAR, SW of Völklingen
Marpingen	Sat & Sun 0700-1330	F	6 & 10	Alte Schulzentrum	Stuffed dog	SAR, W of St. Wendel
Italy						
Sattaglia di Vigonza	Thu 0830-0930	F	7, 11, 18	Next to old school	No award	E of Padova
Romano	Sun 1035	S	Snowshoe			
Vittorio Veneto	Thu 0830-0900	FX	6, 12, 21	See misc. notes	Personalized gloves	W of Bolzano
				Piazza Duomo	Jar of Money (1st 300) W of Aviano	
Netherlands						
Milbeek	Sun 0900-1400	-	2 & 12	Near the church	Medal	SE of Nijmegen, Kerkr. 31
Milbeek	Sun 0900-1200	-	20	Near the church	Medal	SE of Nijmegen, Kerkr. 31
Milbeek	Sun 0800-1200	-	6 & 12	Near the church	Medal	SE of Nijmegen, Kerkr. 31
Milbeek	Sun 0700-1000	M	4 & 12	Near the church	Medal	SE of Nijmegen, Kerkr. 31
Milbeek	Sat & Sun 0800-1400	-	5 & 10	Jeugdgebouw	No award	SE of Nijmegen, Kerkr. 31
Milbeek	Sat & Sun 0800-1400	-	15 & 20	Jeugdgebouw	No award	SE of Nijmegen, Kerkr. 31
Switzerland						
Hagenmud	Sun 0800-1300	-	5 & 10	Turnhalle	Cow glass	SE of Luzern (near Cham)
United Kingdom						
Linton	Sun 0900	-	10 & 20	Health Centre	No award	SE of Cambridge
Milton Lilbourne	Sun 0900-1000	-	10 & 20	Village Hall	Souvenir	NW of Andover
Reading	Sun 0900-1000	-	5 & 10	112 Crescent Road	Souvenir	NW of Andover
Ruudens	Sun 0930	-	10 & 20	The Viking	No award	NW of Andover
Wilhem	Sun 0900-1130	-	10 & 20	The Red Lion	No award	NW of Lincoln

The members of DJK Gänheim Abteilung Wandern, Germany, hold their first Winterwandertag today. During this holiday commemorates the journey of the Three Magi, or Kings, who took gifts to the baby Jesus. It's a German tradition in most areas for children dressed as the three kings to go from house to house, singing traditional songs and in return receiving gifts of small items or money from the residents. To protect the house, the children will write the initials of the Three Kings (C+M+B) and the year over the doorway.

Jennifer West



Back to the walks... If Gänheim is near you, walk a 5K or 10K between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m. If Burgstall is closer, walk that club's 6K or 12K between 7:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Live in Italy? Head to Barbariga di Vigonza and start the 7K, 11K or 18K between 8:30 and 9:30 a.m. Or, for those of you near Vittorio Veneto go for a 6K, 12K or 21K between 8:30 and 9 a.m.

If you live in Germany, participate in the yearly tradition, one foreign to us in the United States. If you can't make it to a folksmarch, stay home and welcome to your door the children and the "blessing" they'll write about it.

A few notes about this week's events:

VOLKS-MARCH CODES:

B - Past prizes available (B-medals)
 D - Wash facilities at start hall.
 F - Free refreshment at control points.
 M - Marathon or long-distance event
 P - Music at start hall
 S - Shorter-friendly trails
 s - Shorter trail noted as stroller-friendly
 T - Torch walk.
 X - Award only while supply lasts.

BWN - Baden-Württemberg Nord
 BWS - Baden-Württemberg Süd
 FRU - Oberfranken (Upper Franconia)
 FRM - Mittelfranken (Middle Franconia)
 FRN - Niederfranken (Lower Franconia)
 HE - Hessen
 NDB - Niederrhein-Oberbayern
 NDS - Münsterland/Berlin
 NRW - Nordrhein-Westfalen
 NDB - Niederrhein
 OPF - Oberpfalz
 RP - Rheinland-Pfalz
 SAR - Saarland
 SCH - Schwaben
 SHH - Schleswig-Holstein/Hamburg
 THS - Thüringen/Sachsen

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Charlotte	€ 287	New Orleans	€ 285
Chicago	€ 241	New York	€ 216
Cleveland	€ 267	Orlando	€ 267
Dallas	€ 268	Phoenix	€ 287
Denver	€ 358	Raleigh	€ 284
Detroit	€ 294	San Diego	€ 309
Houston	€ 295	Seattle	€ 367
Las Vegas	€ 354	Washington	€ 226

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06302-9339	0631-56018

YOUR MONEY

Jobs make higher demands, fewer promises

**BY JONATHAN KRIM
AND GRIFF WITTE**
The Washington Post

ST. CHARLES, Mo. — Teresa Geerling is living the future of life in the middle of the American work force.

After years cleaning the insides of airplanes and polishing their outsides, Geerling was laid off from American Airlines last year. The job was physically taxing for Geerling, 50, but the nearly \$32,000 annual pay and health-care coverage helped provide a typical middle-class life in this small Midwestern community.

Now she works the overnight shift at a local hospital as a nurse's aide while completing coursework to be certified as a medical assistant. That would seem to be a smart move because, unlike airlines, which are contracting, health care is one of the industries that many economists believe could generate millions more jobs in the decades to come.

If she can't stay on her husband's health plan, her costs for health insurance offered by the hospital will be \$200 a month, more than five times as much as at the airline. There are few job protections and no pension benefits beyond the option for a 401(k) savings plan. She makes \$2 an hour less than before; to have a chance at higher pay, she must continually train herself in new areas.

Geerling is at the leading edge of changes that herald a new era for millions of people earning around the national average, \$17 an hour.

This new era requires workers to shoulder more responsibility and risk on the way to financial security, economists say. It also demands they be nimble in an increasingly fluid job market. Those who don't obtain some combination of specialized skills, higher education and professional status that can be constantly adapted will be in danger of sliding down the economic ladder to low-paying service jobs, usually without benefits.

Meanwhile, those who secure the middle-class jobs of the 21st century will have to make \$17 an hour stretch further than ever as they pay more for health care or risk doing without insurance and assume much or all of the burden for their retirement.

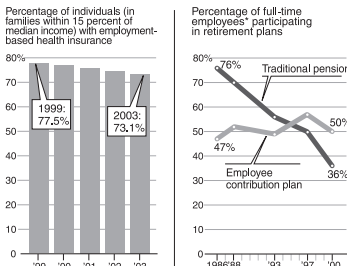
Many economists and scholars acknowledge that the changes wrought by technology and global economic forces will be painful at first. But they say the new structure ultimately will create many kinds of jobs as yet unimagined, in fields such as education, health care and science.

"You have to take the leap of faith that the economy will evolve and there will be this innovation economy that comes," said John McCarthy, a Forrester Research analyst who wrote a report on U.S. jobs going overseas.

Yet many observers also say that the present economic restructuring may be more rocky than similar transitions in the past and that society should take additional measures to ease the struggles of those caught in the middle, especially the three-quarters of Americans who lack a college degree.

Paying More But Getting Less

Benefits such as health insurance and pensions are in decline at companies across America. Middle-class families are paying more for coverage or joining the ranks of the uninsured, and even larger companies are backing away from traditional pension plans.



*At medium and large private establishments

SOURCES: U.S. Census; Employee Benefit Research Institute, based on Census and government data; Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation; Bureau of Labor Statistics

The Washington Post

Analysts say retraining will be key because tomorrow's middle-class jobs likely will be enhanced variations of today's lower-wage jobs.

Clerical positions keeping medical records, for instance, are being transformed into higher-paying technician jobs that involve both

computer skills and the ability to talk to doctors and nurses.

"You can't be some kid who is good with a computer and get that job anymore," said Anthony Carnevale, senior fellow at the National Center on Education and the Economy. The successful candidate will be "someone who can do the computer stuff but also knows the business."

That combination of technology savvy, analytical thinking and interpersonal skills could be the magic formula for U.S. workers in many fields. Jobs that involve all three qualities, said Thomas Kochan, an MIT management professor, are hard to duplicate with machines or with low-wage workers from abroad, putting the Americans who fill them in a strong position to demand not just good wages, but benefits, too.

Over the past two decades, companies have moved away from traditional pensions in which employ-

ers pay the cost and employees get a set amount after retiring. Employer-based health-care coverage has fallen as well, for low-wage workers and increasingly for those in middle-class jobs. One analysis estimates there were 5 million fewer jobs providing health insurance in 2004 than there were just three years earlier. Overall, nearly one in five full-time workers today goes without health insurance; among part-time workers, it's one in four.

Those with benefits often must pick up their share of the higher cost. Employee contributions for family coverage were 49 percent higher in 2004 than in 2001, and contributions for individual coverage were 57 percent higher, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Jobs that provide both a middle-class wage and benefits, even for workers without advanced degrees, still exist, often in union environments. But they're getting harder to find.

As technology has made global competition a reality, American workers — particularly the lower-skilled — have found themselves competing in a far broader marketplace. Their rivals overseas often don't expect or receive benefits at all. That puts American companies at a competitive disadvan-

"It's not helping employers to not be able to offer benefits," said Jennifer Schramm, manager of workplace trends and forecasting at the Society for Human Resource Management. But cutting back on benefits "is something they feel they have to do for economic reasons."

Shifts in the composition of the work force have contributed as well. Jobs in manufacturing are more likely to come with benefits than are jobs in the service sector. But such jobs began a decline in the 1980s that continues today, and factory workers were forced to look elsewhere for a middle-class living. Many retrained, finding work in business services such as sales, information technology and accounting.

Even businesses that are expected to grow, in industries such as health care and education, have begun to pare back the pool of workers eligible for full benefits.

TUESDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES							
52-week		Name	Last	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD % Chg	52-wk % Chg
High	Low						
10,419.48	9,218.88	Dow Jones Industrials	10,678.61	-10.24	-0.10	+1.15	+12.54
3,823.96	2,743.46	Dow Jones Transportation	3,678.33	-82.64	-2.18	-3.15	-22.11
337.79	259.08	Dow Jones Utilities	328.46	-2.24	-0.70	+1.94	+23.54
7,274.31	6,561.77	Dow Jones Composite	7,019.62	-38.19	-0.54	+1.24	+8.56
1,435.04	1,159.74	Amerex Index	1,399.05	-11.83	-0.87	-2.46	-17.43
2,191.60	1,750.82	Nasdaq Composite	2,107.86	-46.29	-2.06	-3.11	+21.45
2,117.98	1,650.77	S&P 500	2,188.85	-14.83	-0.71	-1.97	+8.56
666.99	518.99	S&P MidCap	642.82	-18.15	-2.56	-3.21	+10.34
555.11	345.28	Russell 2000	628.54	-11.90	-1.86	-3.53	+10.29
10,100.00	10,350.00	Dow Jones 5000	10,549.63	+149.63	+1.47	+1.47	+1.47

[illegible][illegible]

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs	\$1,3598
Dollar buys	0.7354
Yen buys	115.19
Japanese yen (Jan. 7)	102.00
South Korean won (Jan. 7)	1,021.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	\$1,3877
British pound	\$1,8304
Denmark (Krone)	1.2609
Egypt (Pound)	1.2702
France (Franc)	\$1,3372
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.7896
Hungary (Forint)	181.10
Iceland (Krona)	136.48
Poland (Zloty)	61.35
Israel (Shekel)	4.3879
Japan (Yen)	108.25
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.2919
Malaysia (Ringgit)	2.3362
Philippines (Peso)	56.20
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	2.4636
Singapore (Dollar)	1.648
South Korea (Won)	1,046.00
Switzerland (Franc)	1.4865
Thailand (Baht)	39.20
Turkey (Lira)	16.64

(Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banks in the United States. Commercial rates for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom for non-local currency exchange rates are available at British Airways in Germany.)

Gold	\$427.60
Silver	\$6.51

PRECIOUS METALS

London close

Gold	\$427.60
Silver	\$6.51

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	3.25
Federal funds market rate	3.25
3-month bill	2.35
30-year bond	4.89

Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of America

Cents and Sensibility
Money tip of the day

U.S. gas prices decline

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The retail price of gasoline fell for the ninth straight week to average \$1.78 per gallon in the States, the Energy Department reported Monday.

The government survey said the average price nationwide of regular-grade unleaded gasoline declined 1.3 cents last week to \$1.778 per gallon. Prices are 27 cents higher than a year ago.

Pump prices are highest on the

West Coast, averaging \$1.93 per gallon, and cheapest on the Gulf Coast, averaging \$1.671 per gallon. In the Midwest, gas averages \$1.718 per gallon.

A key factor behind the high price of gasoline is expensive oil — the result of strong demand, geopolitical uncertainties and tight U.S. supplies of heating oil.

The price of light crude for December delivery fell \$1.41 to settle at \$42.12 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

AFRTS Television Schedule

Updated program listings are available on the first scoreboard page in the sports section or AFRTS's Web site at <http://myaftrts.dodmedia.osd.mil/>

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2005

	AFN-FAMILY	AFN-MOVIE	AFN-EUROPE	AFN-KOREA	AFN-NEWS	AFN-SPORTS	SPECTRUM	AFN-PACIFIC
9:00	Stanley "Who Wevers"	Whip! The Ballad of Lusty Whipple* (2001, Drama) Glenn Close, Jane Maloney	Dr. Phil	Jacquelyn	Nightline	NBA Basketball Teams to Be Announced, (Taped)	30 Minute Meals Low Carb & Lovin' It	Jacquelyn Headline News
9:30	Sagwa-Siamen Cat		(16-48) Oprah Winfrey	Headline News	Hardball With Chris Matthews		Design on a Dime	ESPNNews
10:00	Arthur (E)	(4-8) Movie *** "Stalag 17" (1953, Drama) William Holden, Otto Preminger; American POWs in Germany hit a spy; physical segment is a kiss	(38) Guiding Light	Advisory Block	The O'Reilly Factor		Style Star	Pacific Report
11:00	Sagwa-Siamen Cat		(17) General Hospital	Two and a Half Men		NBA Football	ET News Live	Two and a Half Men
11:30	Stanley "Who Wevers"		Headline News	Will & Grace "Pip-Frog"	60 Minutes	SportsCenter	The King of Queens	Will & Grace "Pip-Frog"
12:00	Dora the Explorer (E)		Judge Judy	Alias "Truth Be Told"			That '70s Show	Desperate Housewives "Pilot"
12:30	The Wiggles "Story Telling"		Today New Year New You, Year-end	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation "Bad to the Bone"	Fox and Friends	College Basketball Notre Dame at Seton Hall (Live)	Charmed "Morality Bites"	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation "Bad to the Bone"
13:00	Bob the Builder (E)	Movie *** "Dangerous Liaisons" (1988, Drama) John Malkovich, Glenn Close. Bored ex-lovers engage in decadent games of seduction.	Legend of Tarzan "Fountain"	Late Show			Aly McBeal "Home Again"	Pacific Report
13:30	Dragon Tales (E)	(16) Movie *** "Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery" (1997, Mike Myers, Comedy)	Aaahh! Real Monsters	Headline News	Access Hollywood			The Tonight Show
14:00	Blue's Clues (E)		Jacquelyn	NBA Inside Stuff (E)	Headline News			Headline News
14:30	Barney & Friends (E)		Headline News	The Late Late Show				The Late Late Show
15:00	Funnies Home Videos		Headline News		American Morning	College Basketball Alabama at Vanderbilt (Live)	Any Day Now "Hi-Fi"	Late Show
15:30	Full House	(16) Movie *** "Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery" (1997, Mike Myers, Comedy)	Aaahh! Real Monsters	Late Show	CNN Live Today		Third Watch "Anywhere But Here"	Access Hollywood
16:00	PolkaDance Ballett runs away.		Headline News		Headline News		Law & Order "Admissions"	Headline News
16:30	Yu-Gi-Oh! "Mind Game"		Headline News			SportsCenter		The Late Late Show
17:00	Doug "Doug Goes Out"	Showbiz Moms & Dads	Headline News	Dennis Miller	FOX News	College Gamenight	The Simpsons	
17:30	Rocket Power	Exert-Movies	Headline News				Everybody Loves Raymond	Dennis Miller
18:00	The Fairly OddParents	Entertainment Tonight	Headline News	Two and a Half Men	60 Minutes	NFL Game of the Week	Summerland "Kicking and Screaming"	Countdown With Keith Olbermann
18:30	Aaliyah	Movie *** "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" (2001) Angelina Jolie. A globe-trotting adventures seeks a fabled artifact.	Headline News	Will & Grace "Pip-Frog"	Countdown With Keith Olbermann		The Practice "The Making of a Trial Attorney"	Entertainment Studios.com
20:00	Hi Heaven "We Do"		Headline News	Desperate Housewives "Pilot"	Entertainment Studios.com	FOX News	NFL Game	
20:30	Sabrina, the Teenage Witch	(4-54) Movie *** "The Spanish Prisoner" (1998) Campbell Scott. An inventor invents a shady businessman.	Headline News	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation "Bad to the Bone"	Headline News	PGA Golf (Taped)	40 Hours Mystery "The Ghost of El Segundo"	Headline News
21:30	Sabrina, the Teenage Witch		Headline News	Good Morning America	Your World With Neil Cavuto	NFL Live	Friends	Good Morning America
22:30	Home Improvement	Movie *** "Boyz n the Hood" (1981, Drama)	The Tonight Show		Lester Holt Live	SportsCenter	The Daily Show	
23:30			Late Show			Pardon the Interruption	Blind Date	
FRIDAY, JANUARY 7, 2005								
00:00	Aaahh! Real Monsters	(11:30) Movie *** "Boyz n the Hood" (1981, Drama)	Late Show	Play With Me Sesame	Headline News	The Hot List	Late Night	Play With Me Sesame
00:30	Rocket Power	Access Hollywood	Headline News	Bear in the Big Blue House	NBC Nightly News	NBA Action		Bear in the Big Blue House
1:00	SpongeBob SquarePants	(2:57) Movie *** "Taking Care of Business" (1996) Jody, James Belushi, Charles Grodin, Anne De Salvo.	College Basketball DePaul at Cincinnati (Live)	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	ABC World News Tonight	NBA Basketball Seattle Sonics at Washington Wizards, From MCI Center in Washington, D.C. (Live)	Summertime "Kicking and Screaming"	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)
2:00	That's So Raven		Dr. Phil	Wheel of Fortune	NewsHour Weekend With Jim Lehrer		The Practice "The Making of a Trial Attorney"	Dr. Phil
2:30	Ali! That		Oprah Winfrey	Hannity & Colmes		NBA Basketball Indiana Pacers at San Antonio Spurs, From the SBC Center in San Antonio (Live)	Friends	Oprah Winfrey
3:00	Hi Heaven "We Do"	Movie *** "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider" (2001) Angelina Jolie. A globe-trotting adventures seeks a fabled artifact.	Headline News	NBC Nightly News	Headline News		40 Hours Mystery "The Ghost of El Segundo"	NBC Nightly News
3:30	Sabrina, the Teenage Witch		Headline News	Judge Judy	Nightly Business Report		Breathingspace Yoga	Judge Judy
4:00	Sabrina, the Teenage Witch	(4:54) Movie *** "The Spanish Prisoner" (1998) Campbell Scott. An inventor invents a shady businessman.	Headline News	Access Hollywood	Lou Dobos Tonight		Caribbean Workout	Access Hollywood
5:30	Barney & Friends (E)		Headline News	(2020) Special Edition	Larry King Live	Inside the NBA (Live)	2020 Special Edition	(2020) Special Edition
6:30	Blue's Clues Blue is sad		Headline News	(17) General Hospital			Body Shopping	(17) General Hospital
7:00	Dragon Tales (E)	Showbiz Moms & Dads	Play With Me Sesame	Larry King Live	NewsNight With Aaron Brown	NFL Game of the Week	The View	Teacher's Pet (E)
7:30	Bob the Builder		Bear in the Big Blue House	Ozzy & Drix	BET Nightly News	SportsCenter	Emiri Live	Ozzy & Drix
8:00	The Wiggles "Animals"	Exert-Movies	Clifford the Big Red Dog (E)	Dr. Phil	News Smiley		Friends	The Brothers Garcia
8:30	Dora the Explorer (E)	Entertainment Tonight	Wheel of Fortune	The Brothers Garcia	Nightline	PGA Golf Mercedes Championships - First Round, From the Parlaton Course at Kapalua in Kapalua, Hawaii. (Taped)	30 Minute Meals	Jacquelyn
9:00	Stanley	Movie "Remembrance" (1996) Eva LaRue, Angela Dickinson. A woman marries into a political family and finds tragedy.	Dr. Phil	Headline News	Headline News		Easy Entertainment-Chiarroli Decorating Centers	Headline News
9:30	Sagwa-Siamen Cat		(16-48) Oprah Winfrey	Headline News	Hardball With Chris Matthews		Desperate Housewives	Headline News
10:00	Arthur (E)		(38) Guiding Light	Advisory Block	The O'Reilly Factor		The Look for Less	Pacific Report
10:30	Reading Rainbow (E)	(10:48) Movie *** "Multiplicity" (1996) Michael Keaton. Scientifically created duplicate complicate a man's life.	Headline News	King of the Hill	Meet My Folks "The Maloney Part I"	PrimeTime Thursday	ET News Live	That '70s Show "I'm a Boy"
11:00	Sagwa-Siamen Cat		Headline News	Today "Dorothy Hemit: Broadway on Ice, Its CapTime"	Fear Factor	Fox and Friends	College Basketball Gonzaga at Santa Clara (Live)	Charmel "The Painted World"
11:30	Stanley "Woodpecker Woes"		Headline News	Pacific Report	Fox and Friends		Aly McBeal "The Wedding"	Pacific Report
12:00	The Wiggles "Friends"	Movie *** "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman: The Movie" (1999) Jane Seymour, Jo Lando.	Headline News	The Tonight Show	American Morning		Any Day Now Rene must defend Mary Elizabeth in court.	The Tonight Show
13:00	Dragon Tales (E)	(4:42) Movie *** "Ghost" (1990, Fantasy) Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg. A murder victim returns to save his beloved friend.	Teacher's Pet (E)	Late Show	CNN Live Today	College Gamenight	Third Watch "Patterns"	Access Hollywood
14:00	Barney & Friends Videos		Headline News	The Late Late Show		SportsCenter	Law & Order "Refuge" (Part 1 of 2)	Headline News
15:00	Funnies Home Videos		Headline News			SportsCenter	The Simpsons	The Late Late Show
16:00	Full House	Dana Carvey Revealed Comedian Dana Carvey.	Headline News	Dennis Miller	FOX News	Inside the NFL	Everybody Loves Raymond	Dennis Miller
16:30	Yu-Gi-Oh! "Mind Game"		Headline News	King of the Hill	PrimeTime Thursday	ESPNNews	Charmed "Witch Wars"	Countdown-Overlmann
17:00	Doug (E)	Movie *** "Blue Streak" (1999) Martin Lawrence, Luke Wilson. A thief poses as a cop to retrieve a stolen car.	Headline News	That '70s Show "I'm a Boy"	FOX News	College Basketball Arizona at California (Live)	Boston Public "Chapter Forty Two"	Entertainment Studios.com
17:30	Rocket Power		Headline News	Good Morning America	Studio B With Shepard Smith	1st & 10	Blue Planet: Seas of Life	Good Morning America
18:00	The Fairly OddParents	Movie *** "Return to Me" (2000) David Duchovny. A man lets his wife know the receipt of his wife's heart.	Headline News	The Tonight Show	Your World With Neil Cavuto	NFL Live	Friends	SportsCenter
19:00	Ali! Grow Up	Movie *** "Friday" (1995) Ice Cube, Chris Tucker.	Headline News	Clifford's Puppy Days (E)	Lester Holt Live	Around the Horn	The Daily Show	Oobi
20:00	Danny Phantom		Late Show			Pardon the Interruption	Blind Date	

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FACES

Looking up Harrison

Beatles guitarist **George Harrison**, actor **Nigel Hawthorne** and **Harry Secombe**, one of the stars of "The Goon Show," have been added to the "Oxford Dictionary of National Biography," Britain's definitive record of the great and the good.

In total, 195 biographies were added to the dictionary in the update published Tuesday. The group included 44 women.

"The dictionary is a record of people who were once our contemporaries and who shaped the society in which we now live," said the dictionary's editor, **Lawrence Goldman**. The revised 60-volume dictionary was published in September.

Other new biographies include **Douglas Adams**, author of "The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy."

Country singer donates to skate park

Country music singer **Brad Paisley** has donated to an effort to build a skate park in his home state of West Virginia after receiving a letter from a 15-year-old boy who told him youths have nowhere to skate.

Paisley, who owns a skateboard, made the donation to the Wheeling Skate Park Committee in response to a letter from **Nathan Mey**, a committee member, the group said Monday.

Paisley, a Glen Dale native, doesn't want the amount of his donation released, said committee member **Kath Fader**.

The 20,000-square-foot facility, estimated to cost between \$200,000 and \$250,000, would be the first free concrete skate park in West Virginia, the committee said. The 32-year-old singer will hold a benefit concert Jan. 15 in Wheeling for victims of September's flooding in the Ohio Valley.



Paisley

New Legion of Honor recipients

French fashion designer **Emanuel Ungaro**, British actress **Kristin Scott Thomas** and French politician **Nicholas Sarkozy** have won entry into France's prestigious Legion of Honor.



Scott Thomas

The three were named to the post of knight, the first of five ranks, when the Official Journal published a list of honorees Saturday.

Ungaro, 71, a fixture on the international fashion scene, is known for styles such as tailored jackets with dressy evening outfits and frills.

Scott Thomas, 44, was nominated for a best actress Oscar for her role in 1996's "The English Patient." Her films also include "Four Weddings and a Funeral" and the upcoming "Man to Man," co-starring **Joseph Fiennes**.

Sarkozy is the head of French President **Jacques Chirac's** ruling Union for a Popular Movement party and widely seen as a rising star in French politics.

The Legion of Honor accolade recognizes distinguished service to France.

Spacey avoids vanity while directing

Actor **Kevin Spacey** didn't get into many fights with his director in the new film, "Beyond the Sea." That's largely because Spacey was in the director's chair.

Spacey told the Chicago Sun-Times in Sunday's editions that the hardest part about directing himself in the **Bobby Darin** biopic was making sure the movie didn't become a vanity project.

"I wanted to make sure the other actors' roles were fully rounded," he said. "I had a wonderful production crew — lots of people worked as my eyes and ears. There was no way I was out there alone."

"I learned a long time ago you had to learn how to direct yourself any time you were on a set with a director you didn't quite trust. You have to do that to save yourself as an actor."

Spacey also said he chose himself as the director of the drama about "Mack the Knife" singer **Darin** and his wife, **Sandra Dee**, out of desperation.

"I only ended up directing because I couldn't find the right person to do it," the Oscar-winning actor said. "It's not a job I was looking for, believe me."



Spacey

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

Steaming up the screen

Rosario Dawson reinvents history as Roxanne in Oliver Stone's 'Alexander'

BY ROGER MOORE
The Orlando Sentinel

Rosario Dawson made a splash the instant she appeared on the big screen, in 1995's scandalous teen sex expose, "Kids." All of 16, she had been discovered — tall, exotic and streetwise — sitting on the stoop of her New York apartment.

In the years since, she has worked with Spike Lee ("He Got Game," "25th Hour"), appeared in his "Men in Black II," "The Rundown" and flops ("The Adventures of Pluto Nash").

Now 25, she has a pivotal role in Oliver Stone's "Alexander," released in the States in November to disappointing reviews and even worse numbers. She plays Roxanne, Alexander's Bactrian wife. With her Persian/Rican/Irish/black/American Indian heritage, Dawson seems the perfect choice for the ancient Afghan who enchanted the bisexual Macedonian Alexander (Colin Farrell) and made him want to father an heir. Their "wedding night" scene — violent, erotic and revealing — may be the most talked-about moment in the movie.

We caught up with Dawson back in November, in Miami on a publicity tour for the movie.

Q What did you have to know about Roxanne to play her?

A There's a lot of mystery about her. I mean, there's more that's been written about Bogoas [a eunuch Alexander is thought to have had a fling with] than Roxanne. I had to be prepared to wing it.

Actually, it was great to not be defined by her history. We just don't know. But Oliver was very specific about her role in Alexander's life, what she illustrates, how she helps him move from A to B, where she fits in with Alexander's love for Hephestion [Alexander's boyfriend] and Bogoas.

She's a fighter. She's strong. She's intense. She's judgmental. She imagines a king to be a very different sort of man than Alexander turns out to be. Her way of thinking really stopped [sexual] progress, in a way, and maybe the world would have been a different place had she had different attitudes.

Q Your look allows you to play "exotic." But there's more to that than just your very interesting genes.

A I really had to test the things that I know are in my comfort zone. I've seen some of the world, and I studied as much as I could about her. Bactrians don't exist any more. We can only guess what she might have been like. She wasn't quite Afghani, or East Iranian. By giving her the odd accent, and the clothes and attitudes, you sort of become exotic. She was just so foreign to these Greeks.

That had to be exciting to Alexander.

Q The wedding night scene does a lot to define who Alexander is, his drives, his sexuality. And you folks play it pretty rough, pretty raw.

A She doesn't have a lot of dialogue to tell you who she was. All we really have is what Ptolemy, the narrator [Anthony Hopkins], says she was.

So the role was always going to be very physical. And the scene where I have the best chance to show who she is ended up nude and rough. She wasn't demure. This wasn't the 1800s. So even though that scene wasn't in the original script, I was down with it.

Q Did anybody get hurt?

A I gave Colin a black eye. Otherwise, he seems to be OK. He was all, "C'mon, you can hit me. C'mon." All right. But I'm from New York, you know. Be careful what you ask for. I was the one who suggested bringing a knife to bed. So I just slapped him, and POW. Ha ha! I had to commit — body, mind and soul. It was vulnerable. It was naked and crazy, and of course people are going to find that provocative.

I'm only just now thinking, "Oh yeah, I'm supposed to take my family to see this." I was so focused on re-creating 2,500 years ago that I kind of forgot that.



Rosario Dawson

KRT

Horoscope

Whatever promise the day shows when you first open your eyes, it quickly morphs into not at all what you expected. The new concoction includes aimless wandering, emotional disconnection and general malaise. But this respite could lead to something creative and brilliant later. The moon void of course teaches us the value of downtime.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(January 6). Your laser-strength visualization powers will help you cut through the psychic jumble and start attracting exactly what you need to improve your world. Start by imagining the perfect love and drawing it near to you. Impossible financial feats are pulled off brilliantly next month. Lucky love signs are Sagittarius and Taurus.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There's a sleeping genius inside you just waiting to be awakened by the spark of inspiration. So scoot off to a library, the library or a museum. You've simply got to get into an environment that will ignite your passion.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). It only takes a couple of broken spokes to compromise the rim of the wheel. Something in a relationship isn't clicking. It can be fixed if both parties are willing to make a minor adjustment. Start by re-distributing duties.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're connected more than you know to the people around you. It takes a momentary disconnect for you to realize this. So appreciate the little rifts and misunderstandings that pepper your interactions.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). There's the love of your life, and then, there's the love of your life at the moment. Sometimes, they are all wrapped up in the same person or endeavor, like they are today, and it's a happy time indeed.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). The stars highlight your need for abundance. If you're slaving all of your time away to be able to play your

bills, you'll never get ahead. Figure out a way to work part time on building your fortune.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). Working on your health is spiritually rewarding — cosmic attainment is a tangible thing in your world. You can almost hear the music of the spheres. On a practical level, this simply means you're feeling damped good.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Get the important stuff out of the way this morning, when your mental synapses are sparking. Someone near wishes you the best of others to the needs of susceptible to his or her own desires.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). You win if the team wins. Sometimes, it helps to have different opinions, but today, it's better to know that everyone is in agreement and working toward the same goal. Outside events provide a unifying joy of happiness.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). This day plays out like a wild jazz guitar riff, and you're grooving right along, though never sure where things are leading. This ability to remain loose earns you the reputation of being cool.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). For some reason, it was easy yesterday to say, "I'll do that tomorrow." So there are now people expecting things from you, and if you don't deliver, it will be noticed. Maybe you just wanted to keep yourself pure.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). The best thing you can do for others is to get yourself in physical alignment. When you treat the tweak in your back or the dry patch of skin, you are actually treating your loved ones to a centered, contented companion.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). The wounded world seems to gravitate to you. You listen with patience and active sympathy — to a point. Then, you provide the swift kick someone needs in order to get off the derriere and do something about it.

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Holiday Mathis



Peanuts



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



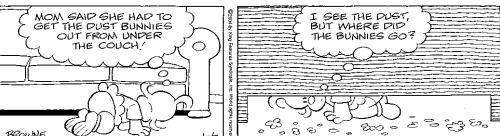
Zits



Cathy



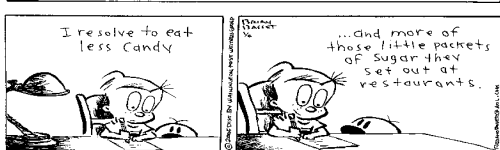
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



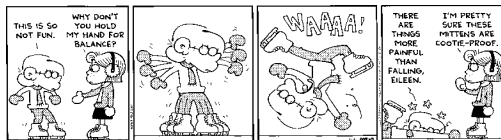
Red Rover



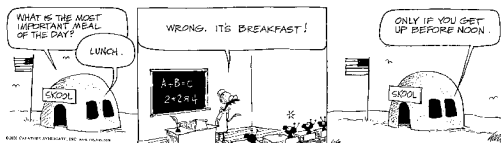
Better or Worse



Footrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



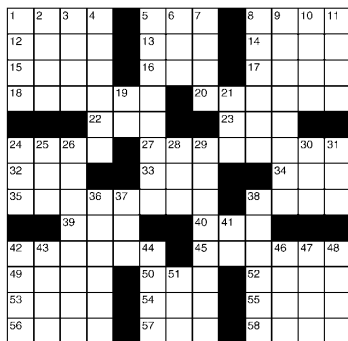
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Sepulcher
- 5 Agt.
- 8 Call off
- 12 Suitable
- 13 Corn spike
- 14 "— Kleine Nacht-musik"
- 15 Plumbing problem
- 16 Prompt
- 17 Dec. holiday
- 18 Patterned fabric
- 20 Inventor's protection
- 22 La follower
- 23 Come together
- 24 Lapidary's supply
- 27 King of Siam's pet word
- 32 "— my brother's keeper?"
- 33 Jamaican music
- 34 Family member
- 35 Peak, maybe
- 38 Venomous vipers
- 39 Grumpy colleague
- 40 Type squares
- 42 Whodunit culprit
- 45 Timmy's rescuer
- 49 Year-end refrain
- 50 Exploit
- 52 Arm bone
- 53 Differently
- 54 Clear the tables
- 55 World Series stats
- 56 Uncomplicated
- 57 "Absolutely"
- 58 Formerly, formerly

Down

- 1 One of Taylor's hobbies
- 2 Gumbo need
- 3 Injure severely
- 4 Circumvent
- 5 Irresponsible
- 6 Perfume label word
- 7 Get ready
- 8 Hockey team, e.g.
- 9 Eternal
- 10 Brother of Er
- 11 Nuisance
- 19 "And I should give a darn, why?"
- 21 Meteorographic datum
- 24 Petrol
- 25 Ostrich's cousin
- 26 Intellectually unstimulating
- 28 Ring decision
- 29 Sloppy
- 30 Tear
- 31 Chowderhead
- 36 Badminton exchange
- 37 Lemieux milieu
- 38 Guerrantee
- 41 Pa's gal
- 42 Patch locale, often
- 43 Kansas city
- 44 Red corundum
- 46 Utter unclearly
- 47 Rustic stopovers
- 48 It's right on the map
- 51 Seek restitution

Answer to Previous Puzzle



1-6

CRYPTOQUIP

VI LJX YRUQ KRAZ AQTTVGW
TRCWQ KJIIQQHJSA. V
WXQAA SZRS YQRGALJX

XCG LJXC UQQH.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I'M VERY HAPPY WITH MY NEW SOUPED-UP STEREO SYSTEM. IT WAS A SOUND INVESTMENT.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Q equals E

Celebrate life to ease pain of loss

Dear Abby: You gave a kindly response to "Missing My Mom," the woman who went ahead with her 5-year-old's birthday party two days after her own mother's death. Had you faulted her, it would have added to the guilt she's already feeling. However, had I been in that woman's shoes, I would have postponed the party for several weeks. The loss of one's parent certainly takes precedence over a child's birthday party — and it would have been a good lesson in values for the little one.

—89-Year-Old Reader in North Royalton, Ohio

Dear Reader: I responded to I did because I feel that no child of 5 should be forced to associate her special day with death and mourning if it is avoidable. Read on for a sample of what other readers had to say on the subject:

Dear Abby: The day I buried

my 17-year-old son was my niece's birthday. She was just a year and a day younger than her cousin. After the funeral, I had an impromptu party for her. She's an adult now with children of her own, but she has never forgotten. To this day she thanks me for thinking about her even though I was grieving. I believe that life must go on. We can't do anything about our loved one's death except celebrate the precious time we had with them here on Earth.

— Loving Aunt in Colorado

Dear Loving Aunt: My dear grandmother, Rose Phillips, shared your philosophy. You have much in common. She was a strong matriarch who always looked forward, and lived to be 103.

Dear Abby: Please remind that mother in Maine that Jacqueline Kennedy gave her little boy

a party a few days after her husband was assassinated. I think "Missing My Mom" was in good company.

— Nancy in Katy, Texas

Dear Nancy: Several other readers also pointed that out.

Dear Abby: I lost my mother in February of 2002, and my granddaughter had her birthday party the same week. My daughter asked me, "Are you sure, Mom?" I said, "Yes, I want to carry on 'Nana's' wonderful spirit of family first!" (My mother always put family first.) I found it comforting to have my family around me when I was at one of the lowest points in my life. Yes, "Missing My Mom" made the right choice. My heart goes out to her.

— J.H., Georgia, Ill.

Dear J.H.: I couldn't agree more.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.uxpress.com/dearabby> Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ALTEM

URUGA

FLOSSI

LALPAP

www.jumble.com

Ans: A

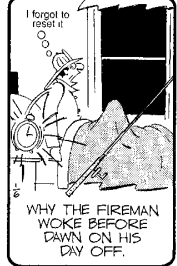
Yesterday's

Jumbles: GUMBO FUNNY BANNER RADIUM

Answer: What the angry driver used to pay his speeding fine — "MAD" MONEY

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

“(Answers tomorrow)”

Give daughter room to be with dad

Dear Annie: I was the victim of domestic violence in my eight-year marriage that ended 10 years ago. After the divorce, I went to counseling with my daughter, "Mari," who was then age 6. I learned that blaming the other parent continuously for the separation would only destroy my relationship with Mari, so for the past 10 years, I have done everything I can to encourage and sustain Mari's close relationship with her father. I never mentioned his abuse, but I know Mari remembers some of the more serious incidents.

Mari is now 16. Six months ago, my ex-husband was diagnosed with a terminal case of Hepatitis C. Prior to the diagnosis, Mari had behaved in a typical "I-hate-my-Mom" fashion for about a year, but I thought it was a passing teenage thing and we would eventually get back to our old loving relationship. But she shocked me when she abruptly moved into her father's house and

now refuses to have anything to do with me. I miss her desperately, but the courts tell me that a 16-year-old has custody of herself. What is going on here?

— Distressed Mom in Sacramento

Dear Distressed: You say Mari remembers the abuse, which means she may have felt some ill will toward her father over the years. Now he is dying, and Mari wants to make it up to him by spending as much time as possible by his side. Avoiding you is easier than dealing with your disappointment and hurt.

You have been a class act for the past 10 years. Tell Mari you love her and you are happy she is with her father during this time of his life. Avoiding you is easier than dealing with your disappointment and hurt. Hide your bitterness even if it means being an actress worthy of an Academy Award. In time, your relationship will be stronger because you supported her.

Dear Annie: I have a very

dear friend who insists on calling me every night. I work in an office, and my job requires a lot of phone work. When I get home, the last thing I want to hear is my phone ringing.

I can't tell her to stop without hurting her feelings or lying to her. She's an older woman with a family, and she lives three hours away from me. Most of the time our phone conversations are a lot of dead air, since there's not much to talk about when you speak to someone every day.

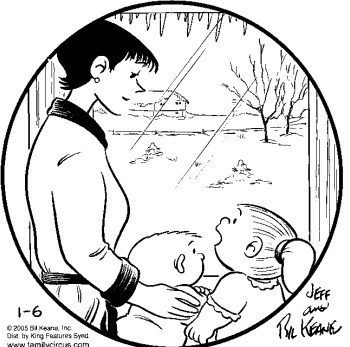
— Tone-Deaf

Dear Tone-Deaf: If you are unwilling to tell this woman that you're busy and must hang up, simply stop answering her phone. If you have Caller ID, use it. Otherwise, invest in an answering machine and let it screen your calls. You don't have to be held hostage by this woman.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.

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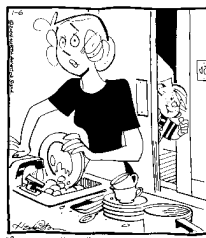
Family Circus



“Remember last summer when we prayed for cooler weather, Mommy? I think we overdid it.”



Dennis the Menace



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The Far Side



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Non Sequitur



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Boggs succeeded beyond expectations

By FRED GOODALL

The Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. — Wade Boggs rattled off the information without hesitation.

"April 26, 1982, off Rich Dotson. A base hit in the home against Chicago in the first game of a doubleheader," Boggs said, recalling the first hit of an 18-year major league career that led to his first-ballot election to the Hall of Fame on Tuesday. "Need anything else?"

A career .328 hitter who won five American League batting titles and finished with 3,010 hits, the 12-time All-Star also was known for an array of superstitions pre- and postgame rituals, as well as a near obsessive passion for detail.

He never considered himself a great player, merely a good one with an insatiable hunger for success.

"One of my biggest attributes is I love to prove people wrong. When they told me I couldn't do something, it made me go out and work twice as hard as I thought I had to," Boggs said. "If I thought 125 ground balls was enough, I took 175. If I thought 75 swings was enough, I went out and took 100."

Although Boggs had gradually weaned himself from some of the superstitions that drove him during his playing days with the Red Sox, New York Yankees and Tampa Bay Devil Rays, he reverted to a couple of them Tuesday — waking up at 4:47 a.m. and eating his traditional game-day meal of chicken.

He even found meaning in the time he received the call — 12:26



Wade Boggs, above, attends a news conference with his wife, Debbie, on Tuesday in Tampa, Fla., following the announcement of his election into the Baseball Hall of Fame. Boggs, 46, winner of five AL batting titles, became the 41st player elected on his first year of eligibility. Also elected was Ryne Sandberg.

p.m. — Notifying him that had been elected by 91.86 percent of the ballots. He wore No. 26 with Boston and No. 12 with New York and Tampa Bay.

"This is the day every Little League dreams of. That if he has a great major league career that one day maybe he'll get into the Hall of Fame," he said.

Boggs' biggest supporter for Cooperstown didn't have a vote.

His father, Win, recalled how his son — then just 4 or 5 years old — would sit on the steps of their Tampa home with his bat and glove waiting for Win to come home from work. By the time Win was 10, dad had a hunch he would be special.

"I knew it then. I just didn't want to make a big deal about it," Win Boggs said. "It was in his heart and in his mind. He had a

fire burning in him, as far as baseball was concerned, that most people never even imagine."

Boggs credits his father, who coached him in Little League and later took countless phone calls from him while he was in the minors, with making him the player he was.

He also thanked his wife, Debbie, for "cooking all that chicken" and son Brett, a high school cen-

ter fielder, for accepting such a limited diet as a youngster.

"Probably the best batting tip that I ever got was how my father described my hitting ability. It's wait, weight, ... You wait on the ball and then transfer your weight, which has a lot of principles of the Charley Lau theory," Boggs said.

"It doesn't really sit well with the Ted Williams theory. I had to go head-to-head with Ted being in the Red Sox organization. Ted was always a hit-to-hand man. But the thing about it is, you have to stick with something that works and not try to deviate too far from it to be successful. I knew how I could be successful and contribute the most that I could and that was the direction I went."

Boggs was with the Red Sox for 11 seasons, winning batting titles in 1983 and from 1985-88. He spent five years in New York, helping the Yankees win the 1996 World Series and finished his career with a two-year stint with his hometown Devil Rays, becoming the first player to homer for his 3,000th hit in 1999.

He left baseball after briefly serving as a special assistant and hitting instructor for Tampa Bay to spend more time with his family and work as a volunteer coach for his son's high school team.

Boggs said he has no preference for whether he enters the Hall as a Red Sox, Yankee or Devil Ray. Boston would appear to be the front-runner.

"Whichever one they pick," he said. "If you take any one of those out of the equation, I don't make it ... Whichever they choose is fine with me."

Source: Dodgers agree to tentative deal with pitcher Perez

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Odalis Perez agreed to re-sign with the Los Angeles Dodgers on Tuesday, tentatively coming to terms on a \$24 million, three-year contract.

The deal, likely to be completed within a few days, was confirmed by a person close to the pitcher who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Dodgers spokesman John Olguin said the team had no comment.

Perez was 7-6 with a 3.25 ERA in 31 starts last year. He was the majors with 18 no-decisions and had the worst run support among NL starters, at 3.30 runs per nine innings.

Keeping Perez gives the Dodgers a reliable starter in a rotation filled with uncertainty. He joins right-handers Jeff Weaver, Brad Penny and Edwin Jackson, and left-hander Kaz Ishii.

Shane Green is expected to Arizona if the Diamondbacks can agree on a contract extension with the slugger. Catching prospect Dioner Navarro and pitching prospect William Contreras would go to the Dodgers as part of the trade, and the Dodgers also would give Arizona \$8 million.



In addition, the Dodgers avoided arbitration with quick-timed outfielder Milton Bradley by agreeing to a \$2.5 million, one-year contract. Bradley, who made \$1.73 million last year, can earn an additional \$750,000 in performance bonuses.

Bradley had career highs in homers (19), RBIs (67), runs (72) and hits (138) in 141 games with the Dodgers last season, although he made as much news because of his temper.

Last month, Bradley served three days in jail in Ohio for driving away while being issued a speeding ticket in 2003.

He faces a Feb. 22 trial in Ohio on a misdemeanor count of disorderly conduct stemming from a Nov. 25 arrest for interfering with someone else's traffic stop. If convicted, he could receive 30 days in jail or a \$250 fine.

Bradley was suspended for four games in June for tossing a bag of balls onto the field following an ejection, and suspended for five more games in September after a bottle-throwing tan-

trum and confrontation with fans at Dodger Stadium.

In October, the Dodgers decided not to discipline Bradley for a clubhouse confrontation with a reporter.

"Milton was a key to our team's success in 2004, and we expect him to be a major contributor again in 2005," Dodgers GM Paul DePodesta said Tuesday. "He is an accomplished player with the ability to be even more."

The 26-year-old Bradley has a .265 average, with 41 homers, 195 RBI and 48 stolen bases in parts of five major league seasons with Montreal, Cleveland and the Dodgers.

Twins extend Gardnere's contract through '07

MINNEAPOLIS — Ron Gardnere was given a two-year contract extension through 2007 by the Minnesota Twins on Wednesday, his reward for leading the team to three AL Central titles in three seasons as manager.

Last year, Gardnere, 47, became the fourth manager in major league history to start his career with three straight first-place finishes, joining Larry Dierker (Houston, 1997-99), Ralph Houk (New York Yankees,

1961-63) and Hugh Jennings (Detroit, 1907-09).

Guiding the Twins to a 92-70 record, Gardnere finished second in AL Manager of the Year voting last season to Buck Showalter of the Texas Rangers. The Twins lost to the Yankees in the first round of the playoffs for the second straight season.

Gardnere, who first joined the Minnesota organization in 1986 as a player, became third-base coach in 1991 and replaced Tom Kelly as manager in 2002.

Mariners land SS Reese to sharpen defense

SEATTLE — Shortstop Pokee Reese agreed Tuesday to a \$1.2 million, one-year contract with the Seattle Mariners, a deal with a club option that could make it worth up to \$4.45 million for two seasons.

Reese received a \$100,000 signing bonus with a base salary for next season of \$800,000 and up to \$300,000 in performance bonuses.

The 31-year-old Reese played in 96 games with the World Series champion Boston Red Sox last season, making 57 starts at shortstop and 18 at second base. He missed 45 games with a

strained ribcage and played late in the season as a defensive substitute.

Reese played only 133 games over the past two seasons but made just six errors in 280 chances at shortstop, a .979 fielding average, and one error in 113 chances at second base for a .991 fielding average.

Selig's office rejects Zimmerman's contract

ARLINGTON, Texas — Pitcher Jeff Zimmerman's minor league contract with the Texas Rangers was rejected by the baseball commissioner's office.

The deal, agreed to last Dec. 21, but when the Rangers didn't offer Zimmerman salary arbitration Dec. 7, they became ineligible to sign the right-handed reliever until May 1.

Rangers spokesman Gregg Elkin said Tuesday that the team expects to be able to sign Zimmerman to a minor league contract before spring training begins next month. Under baseball procedures, when spring training starts a team can ask the other 29 major league clubs to allow it to re-sign a former player to a minor league deal. He could not be added to the big league roster before May 1, but that is not an issue.

Holmgren defends decisions

BY TIM KORTE

The Associated Press

KIRKLAND, Wash., — Mike Holmgren had no chance Tuesday.

The Seattle coach wanted to focus on this weekend's playoff game against St. Louis rather than rehash Shaun Alexander's caustic comments from last week-end. Sorry, coach.

Alexander's claim that he was "stabbed in the back" and denied the NFL rushing title by Holmgren was a popular topic during the coach's weekly news conference.

There were plenty of questions, too, about Holmgren's handling of trouble-prone receiver Koren Robinson.

"Shaun's situation came and went. It's over," Holmgren said. "Koren's situation? We haven't had Koren much in the last six weeks. We've been playing without him. Would I like to have Koren? Yes, I would. But we're moving forward."

Holmgren said he hadn't received an apology from Alexander. The running back claimed after last Sunday's 28-26 victory over Atlanta that a 1-yard quarterback sack cost him the NFL rushing title.

On Monday, Alexander apologized to fans for his comments, but said he didn't need to apologize to Holmgren or his teammates — saying they know him well enough to realize he doesn't value statistics ahead of wins.

"It's a non-factor," fullback Mark Strong said. "Nobody even brought it up today, who knows it's the right thing to do. Shaun did what he had to do yesterday, in a



Seattle Seahawks coach Mike Holmgren said he had no agendas in making quarterback Matt Hasselbeck run into the end zone from a yard out with 4:28 remaining in Sunday's game.

press conference and a formal apology. As far as I'm concerned, it's done."

Holmgren said he didn't even know Alexander was 1 yard short of tying the Jets' Curtis Martin for the NFL rushing title when he called for Matt Hasselbeck's decisive TD sneak, which put Seattle up 28-20 with 4:28 to play.

"Honest to goodness, you guys, I suppose this is interesting," Holmgren said. "To me, it wasn't that complicated. No one was intentionally doing anything. Inches? Quarterback sneak. That's it."

Holmgren said he planned to help Alexander get 2 more yards on Seattle's next possession. That never happened, because the Falcons used the rest of the clock on their final drive, capped by a TD as time expired.

"There was no one, other than Shaun, who wanted him to get that record more than me," the coach said.

Seattle's defense held, foiling the Falcons' two-point conversion attempt and sealing the victory. That gave the Seahawks the NFC West title and a home game Saturday against the Rams.

Holmgren said he hadn't discussed the issue with Alexander.

"We'll practice. At some point, we'll probably bump into each other in the hallway," Holmgren said. "It's only a distraction if you



Seattle's Shaun Alexander, above, was 1 yard short of sharing the NFL rushing title with Curtis Martin. Alexander said he felt "stabbed in the back" by Mike Holmgren after the coach called for a quarterback sneak from the 1-yard line late in Seattle's 28-26 victory over Atlanta on Sunday.

make it a distraction, and I don't think this is a distraction."

Dealing with Robinson is more complicated. Holmgren must decide whether the standout receiver will play against the Rams. He sent Robinson home before kick-off last weekend for violating an undisclosed team rule.

"He is practicing today," Holmgren said. "I haven't made the decision on what his role will be. My players committee is involved in this, as well. I'll make a decision by the end of the week."

Robinson, who declined interviews Tuesday, missed six of the final seven games: two for breaking team rules and four after an NFL suspension for violating the league's substance-abuse policy.

Holmgren repeated his position that he feels obligated to help his players if they have personal problems. He said Robinson isn't receiving special treatment and hinted there's more to the issue than he can disclose, but it's a private matter.

"There are things that no one knows are going on," Holmgren said. "There are reasons. I know that's going to raise questions and probably no one's ever going to get those answers."

Holmgren met with Robinson on Monday.

"I did a lot of talking. He did a lot of listening," Holmgren said.

AP picks Manning as top offensive player

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Peyton Manning was a runaway winner of The Associated Press 2004 NFL Offensive Player of the Year — as if there could be any doubt.

The Indianapolis Colts' star quarterback had perhaps the greatest passing season in league history. He broke Dan Marino's 20-year-old record with 49 touchdown passes and had a passer rating of an almost unmatchable 121.1, shattering Steve Young's mark of 112.8 set in 1994. Manning threw only 10 interceptions and led the Colts to the AFC South title with a 12-4 record.

Manning got 35 votes from a nationwide panel of 48 writers and broadcasters who cover the NFL. He easily outdistanced Eagles receiver Terrell Owens and Vikings quarterback Daunte Culpepper, who each got four votes.

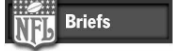
"I feel more comfortable than I did last year," said Manning, who was co-MVP in 2003 along with Steve McNair of Tennessee. "My goal every year has been to be a better player every year than the year before, and I really feel I've done that."

Bengals' defensive coach Frazier is let go

CINCINNATI — The Bengals fired defensive coordinator Leslie Frazier on Wednesday, the staff change to coach Marvin Lewis' staff since the finish of their 8-8 season.

Frazier was defensive coordinator in Lewis' two seasons, when the defense's inability to stop the run was a glaring problem.

Lewis came to Cincinnati with a reputation for defense. He co-ordinated the unit that helped Baltimore win the Super Bowl in the 2000 season — but the Bengals have struggled to stop opponents in his two seasons as head coach. They finished 28th in defense in 2003, and were 19th last season.



Briefs

Jaguars fire offensive coordinator Musgrave

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Jacksonville Jaguars offensive coordinator Bill Musgrave was fired Tuesday after Jacksonville finished last in the AFC and 26th in the league in scoring (16.3 points per game). Musgrave was heavily criticized during the season for not getting the most out of an offense that featured running back Fred Taylor, receiver Jimmy Smith and emerging quarterback Byron Leftwich.

The Jaguars struggled in the red zone, on third downs and in short-yardage situations.

Bears dismiss offensive coordinator Shea

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — The Chicago Bears fired offensive coordinator Terry Shea on Tuesday after a season in which the team had one of the NFL's worst offenses.

The Bears (5-11) ranked last in six major statistical categories, including scoring (14.4 points per game) and total yards (238.5), using four quarterbacks.

Chicago had more lost fumbles (21) than offensive touchdowns (19).

NFL fines Lynch \$75,000 for helmet-to-helmet hit

DENVER — Broncos safety John Lynch was fined \$75,000 by the NFL on Tuesday for a helmet-to-helmet hit on Colts fullback Dallas Clark last weekend.

A league spokesman said Lynch, a 12-year veteran with a reputation as a hard hitter, received the harsh penalty because this was his fourth fine for unnecessary roughness since 2001. The first three all cost him \$7,500.

The hit knocked Clark out of the game with a concussion.

With Edwards as pilot, it's time for the Jets to take off

BY GARY MYERS

New York Daily News

NEW YORK — The Jets were one and done in the playoffs in Herm Edwards' first year, two and done his second and didn't get it done his third.

Edwards, in the fourth year of his program, has made the playoffs three times, the most of any coach in the Jets' 45-year history. That's a nice accomplishment, but it's time he takes his team on a run deep into January. The Jets won't apologize for losing three of their past four, going 5-6 after being 5-0 or backing into the playoffs, but this will be a forgettable season if they lose in San Diego on Saturday.

Teams eliminated in the wild-card round quickly fade in with the 20 teams that didn't make the playoffs.

So, basically, do the divisional-round losers. All it does is look good on a coach's résumé when counting playoff appearances.

Edwards has created a positive environment in the locker room and provided the Jets with stability, but ultimately, he will

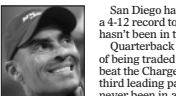
be judged by January.

There are 15 current coaches who made it to at least the conference championship game by their fourth year in their first NFL head coaching job. The way the Jets have played the past two months, Edwards is not about to become No. 16.

"It's about winning," he said earlier this week. "If we get to a conference championship game, that's great. But then that isn't good enough either. You need to win the title. It's Super Bowl. That's what we are trying to do."

If the Jets had to go on the road in the first AFC playoff games, they were fortunate to draw the Chargers. They won in San Diego the second week of this season and turned around their season in 2002 when they went out there and beat the red-hot Chargers by 31 points.

"Until you get to the playoffs, you can't win a championship," Edwards said. "So we're at that point again. We have another opportunity."



Edwards

San Diego had a magical season, flipping a 4-12 record to 12-4, but this is a team that hasn't been in the playoffs since 1995.

Quarterback Drew Brees, on the verge of being traded in September after the Jets beat the Chargers, instead wound up as the third leading passer in the league. But he's never been in a playoff game.

Neither has LaDainian Tomlinson. Marty Schottenheimer built his reputation as being one of the best regular-season coaches in the past 20 years, but one of the worst in the postseason. He lost two conference title games when he was in Cleveland, one when he was with Kansas City, and twice lost in the divisional round when the Chiefs were the AFC's No. 1 seed.

Schottenheimer's 177 regular-season victories are the most among active coaches and eighth on the career list, but he is just 5-11 in the playoffs.

Of course, the Jets haven't won a playoff road game in 22 years and need to win three of them — the '85 Patriots are the only team to do it — to get to the Super Bowl. That would mean, conceivably, Edwards adding Monday that Chad Pennington's shoulder is bothering him and "he's lost a little bit of his velocity on throw-

ing the ball."

Edwards is not about to switch to Quincy Carter unless Pennington can't lift the football. The sore-armed QB is being challenged by defenses clogging the middle and forcing him to throw over the top or to the sideline. Pennington, who never had much of a fastball, is having trouble delivering it all on his own. The team's remarkable accuracy is off, too. He's probably no better than 85 percent, but at this point in the season, a lot of players would settle for 85 percent.

Just because the Jets were 6-10 last year doesn't mean they deserve a parade for getting to 10-6. These quick reversals happen all the time. Not only did the Chargers turn it around this season, but the Steelers were also 6-10 last year and shot all the way to 15-1 and the AFC's No. 1 seed. The Panthers made it to the Super Bowl last year just two seasons after they were 1-15 and one season after they were 7-9.

It's time to win in the playoffs," Edwards said. "That's very, very important."

Edwards makes the playoffs. Now he needs to win put together a January to remember.

Steelers QB unanimous choice for top rookie

By BARRY WILNER
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Ben Roethlisberger did what John Unitas, Joe Montana, Dan Marino, Brett Favre and every other NFL quarterback never managed by winning The Associated Press Offensive Rookie of the Year award.

The first quarterback to win the honor since its inception in 1957, Roethlisberger did so unanimously, the second straight rookie to get all the votes. The Pittsburgh Steelers' young star received all 48 votes Wednesday from a nationwide panel of writers and broadcasters who cover pro football.

Last year, Arizona receiver Anquan Boldin also swept the panel. But Boldin didn't go unbeaten in 13 starts, as Roethlisberger did in leading the Steelers to a franchise-best 15-1 record, which led the NFL this season. Neither, of course, has any other rookie QB.

"I think it is just a comfort level every week, learning and practicing, getting on the same page as these guys," Roethlisberger said. "I think that has really helped by being out there in practice and working with these guys, the receivers, the linemen, the running backs, and just getting familiar with each other has really helped our success and our progress."

Roethlisberger's progress was aided by having a superb running game featuring Jerome Bettis and Duce Staley, operating behind perhaps the league's best offensive line. Pittsburgh ranked second in rushing.

And the Steelers' defense was the league's best, allowing the fewest points and yards.

That meant Roethlisberger didn't need to win many games with his arm.

2004 NFL OFFENSIVE
ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Big Ben garners top honor

Pittsburgh Steelers' quarterback Ben Roethlisberger took The Associated Press' 2004 NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year award.

Roethlisberger

GS ATT COMP YDS TO INT
13 295 196 2,621 17 11

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

- 13-0 in games started.
- Set NFL rookie-record completing 66.4 percent of his passes, compared to Dan Marino's 58.3 for Miami in 1983, and a passer rating of 98.1, which tops Marino's 96.0.

Yet when he did, he brought back the AFC North champions with late drives to beat Jacksonville and the New York Giants. His composure, competitiveness and intelligent handling of the offense were keys to those wins — and several others in which he didn't require such heroics.

"I did not really know what to expect," said Roethlisberger, the 11th choice in the first round of the draft, and the third overall quarterback taken behind Eli Manning and Phillip Rivers, neither of whom had much of an impact.

"I thought coming in, knowing about Tommy (Maddox) as the starter, that I was going to come in and just try to learn this offense and try to learn to be a backup, whatever coach was going to ask of me," Roethlisberger said. "Obviously, things changed."

They changed when Maddox injured his right elbow in Game 2 at Baltimore, the Steelers' only loss.

Roethlisberger finished fifth in passer rating at 98.1. He completed 196 of 295 passes — yes, only 99 incompletions — for 2,621 yards, with 17 touchdowns and 11 interceptions. His best work came in the middle of the schedule and he wasn't quite as dynamic in December. But he kept winning, even as he was given more responsibility in the offense.

Saban gets to work in Miami

By STEVEN WINE
The Associated Press

DAVIE, Fla. — In the weeks ahead, new Miami Dolphins coach Nick Saban must revamp the coaching staff, evaluate the players he inherited, trim payroll to meet the salary cap, hire a player personnel chief, shop for free agents and prepare for the college draft.

"We'll have a busy few months coming up," Saban said. "Let me just say this: We will make slowly when it comes to making decisions. We're going to be methodical in evaluating all those areas."

The sixth coach in the Dolphins' 39-year history reported for work Tuesday, arriving at the team complex by helicopter shortly before 11 a.m. EST. He met with three assistant coaches, spoke at an introductory news conference and expressed confidence he can revive a franchise coming off its worst season since the 1960s.

"I'm not here to predict championships," Saban said. "I'm here to formulate a process that helps people be successful. If we can do that, we're going to put ourselves in a position to have an opportunity to win a championship sometime in the future."

Despite his reputation for turning around programs at LSU and Michigan State with a hard-nosed approach, the 53-year-old Saban said he's not a survivor, workaholic or disciplinarian. Indeed, he sounded more like a CEO conducting a Power Point presentation.

"In every part of this organization, we want to try to be on the cutting edge of everything we do



During his introductory news conference on Tuesday, Dolphins coach Nick Saban said he would welcome back retired running back Ricky Williams.

— in systems, analysis, everything," he said.

During a 45-minute news conference, Saban never smiled but did flash occasional humor, such as when he drew a parallel between coaching and raising his two children.

"Nicholas is 18," Saban said. "If you take the keys to the truck away, you can get just about anything you want done."

On Christmas Day, Saban agreed to a five-year deal with the Dolphins worth at least \$22.5 million, but he delayed starting the job until after coaching in LSU's loss to Iowa in the Capital One Bowl on New Year's Day. After repeatedly turning down past over-

tures from the NFL, Saban was lured to the Dolphins by his winning tradition — this season's 4-12 disaster notwithstanding — and Wayne Huizenga's reputation as a hands-off owner.

"The challenge that is here with a great organization and a great owner in a great part of the country was very appealing," Saban said. "I felt like after 11 years of being a coach in college, I was ready for a new challenge."

The Dolphins set a franchise record for defeats, but Saban said there's enough talent on the roster to do better. He left the door open to the return of running back Ricky Williams, whose retirement in July began Miami's downward spiral.

"If Ricky Williams has value to this organization, he's somebody we'd like to have as a part of this organization," Saban said. "I would be open to that."

Saban met Tuesday with friend and former colleague Jim Bates, who went 3-4 as the Dolphins' interim coach after being promoted from defensive coordinator when Dave Wannstedt resigned in November. Bates might return as his coordinator job, but he's also interested in head coaching opportunities elsewhere in the NFL.

"We'll probably have another meeting in a week or so," Saban said. "The decision is going to get made — not what's best for anyone but that organization, and how we can work together to help that organization. If it's not going to be the case, it's something we really shouldn't do."

Chris Foerster is unlikely to be retained as offensive coordinator, and Saban said he hopes to hire someone with NFL experience.

Buffalo sticking with embattled Bledsoe

By JOHN WAWROW
The Associated Press

ORCHARD PARK, N.Y. — Sub-par numbers aside, quarterback Drew Bledsoe is confident he's earned the right to remain the Buffalo Bills' starter.

"It's my team," Bledsoe said this week after the Bills missed the playoffs for the fifth consecu-

tive year despite winning eight of their final 10 games.

The Bills — from coach Mike Mularkey to team owner Ralph Wilson — agree with Bledsoe.

"It wasn't all Drew," Wilson said Sunday after a loss to Pittsburgh.

Mularkey shrugged off questions of Bledsoe's so-so passing numbers.

"It's do you win or lose? That's the stat that comes out most," Mularkey said. "I don't know what the rest has to do with performance to be honest with you."

Bledsoe finished 18th in the league with 2,932 yards passing. He had 20 touchdowns passes, 16 interceptions, and his efficiency rating of 76.6 ranked 13th in the AFC and 25th overall.

NFL Challenge Hall of Fame

Top Scores for Week 17

240	steeler on the rhine	Sembach AB
220	davej	Cambria-Fritsch Kaserne
214	Ski2715	Kadena
212	Steel Thunder	Buechel AB
212	broncobone	A Trip 4-4 Cav
204	God's Chosen	Ramstein AB GE
200	q-daddy	Misawa
200	crewsn944	Dco 29th Sig Bn
200	maggys44	Central Texas College
200	TeamJohnson	D 701 MSB

STARS AND STRIPES

Sponsored by:



Best Overall Scores

STEELFROGWOOD	MAG-12
Jack58	422 ABS RAF Croughton
Joe Corleion	Misawa
SPIELMEISTER 04	Hohenfels
Who Cares	MNF-1 DCSPER
giants1	hnc 2/37 ar
cwb0y48	Rhein Main AB
Jaguar One	DoDDS
JMAC	DECA
adetenris	Babenhausen

See websites for official game rules.

Check this space every Thursday during the entire NFL season for the weeks Top Scores and Best Overall Scores during the NFL Challenge.

No. 22 Terps prepare for ACC foes with win

By DAVID GINSBURG

The Associated Press

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — Maryland used another feel-good victory at home as preparation for a difficult road trip.

John Gilchrist and Nik Caner-Medley each scored 17 points, and the 22nd-ranked Terps cruised to their fifth straight victory, 85-53 over Mount St. Mary's on Tuesday night.

Gilchrist was removed with 6 minutes left, ruining his chance to reach the 20-point barrier in a sixth consecutive game. Travis Garrison had 15 points for Maryland (9-2), which improved to 108-2 in nonconference home games since coach Gary Williams arrived in 1989.

The Terrapins' next two games are against highly ranked Atlantic Coast Conference foes, Saturday at No. 3 North Carolina and next Tuesday at No. 4 Wake Forest.

"It was good to get a lot of guys in there, let people know we might need him on Saturday," Williams said. "We're looking forward to the challenge. It's a very good team down on their court. We'll see how that goes."

Williams started D.J. Strawberry at forward ahead of Caner-Medley, whose run of 48 consecutive starts ended. The move was a disciplinary measure, but after the game the coach insisted that he was still forgiven.

"We're fine. Nik started the second half," Williams said.

"It's just for tonight." Caner-Medley, who played only 19 minutes, won't let the benching influence his play against North Carolina.

"I've always been told it's 10 percent of what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it," he said. "I'm just going to play the same and try to win. We've got to be real focused and prepared to play on Saturday."

Caner-Medley came in second on the team in scoring with a 14.6 average.

Landy Thompson scored 20 points for the Mountaineers (3-7), who have lost four in a row. Mount St. Mary's shot 30 percent in falling to 0-5 against the Terrapins and 1-14 against teams from the ACC.

The Mountaineers' next face Northeast Conference foe Central Connecticut State on Thursday.

"Just the way they used to do



AP
Maryland's Nik Caner-Medley, whose streak of starts ended at 48 because of a disciplinary measure, scored 17 points in the Terrapins' 85-53 victory over Mount St. Mary's on Tuesday in College Park, Md.

get ready for a league game, we had to use them in the same fashion," Mount coach Milan Brown said. "I think we competed for the most part, I didn't think we competed for 40 solid minutes."

After forcing 12 turnovers and shooting 52 percent in taking a 47-25 halftime lead, Maryland opened the second half with a 7-0 run to go up by 29.

Florida LB Crowder to enter NFL Draft

The Associated Press

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Florida's best defensive player won't be around for the Urban Meyer era.

Linebacker Channing Crowder said Wednesday he will forgo his final two years of eligibility and enter the NFL Draft.

The 6-foot-3, 245-pound sophomore from Atlanta was third on the team in tackles last season with 73 despite missing three games with a sprained arch in his right foot. He finished his career with 179 tackles, including 13 1/2 for a loss.

He also had two sacks, three fumble recoveries, two forced fumbles and one interception.

"This has been a very difficult decision for me to make," said Crowder, who led the nation in tackles by a freshman with 106 in 2003. "I felt like it was best for me and my family to pursue a professional career."

Crowder joins running back Clatterick Fason as the team's lone early draft entries. Fason, who has a wife and two children, announced he was turning pro in mid-December.

Underclassmen have until Jan. 15 to declare for draft and have until Jan. 19 to withdraw their names.

Meyer, who led Utah to a 12-0 season, is the new Florida coach.

Member of historic Chaminade basketball team shot to death

WAILUKU, Hawaii — A homeless man who played a pivotal role in the biggest upset in college basketball history was found dead of multiple gunshot wounds two days after being accused of sexual assault, officials said Tuesday.

Police on Maui identified the man as Mark A. Wells, 44, a member of the Chaminade University team that defeated then-No. 1 Virginia and 7-foot-4 Ralph Sampson 22 years ago.

Wells made three free throws over the final 46 seconds of the game to help secure the 77-72 victory for the 800-student NAIA school from Honolulu on Dec. 23, 1982. He had seven points, five assists and four rebounds.

"He was our point guard," retired Chaminade coach Merv Lopes said in a telephone interview from his home on the island

Sports Briefs

of Hawaii. "He was our quarterback, our go-to guy. He was an outstanding player, for sure."

Wells was found dead of multiple gunshot wounds Saturday near a hiking trail at Nakalele Point, police said. An autopsy conducted Sunday determined he had been shot six times.

Wells was arrested Thursday for investigation of sexual assault, and released the same day without being charged, Maui Police Sgt. Jamie J. Becraft said.

Wells was living in Hilo in 2002 when he became the team to join other members of the team at a reunion to mark the 20th anniversary of the game, and then stayed in the island.

Wells had lived with a group of homeless people in a makeshift camp near former sugarcane fields in Lohaina.

Lopes had recruited Wells from a playground in Santa Monica, Calif.

Dementieva beats Sharapova in opening match

HONG KONG — Elena Dementieva beat Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova 6-7 (2), 6-3, 6-1 Wednesday in the Champions Challenge exhibition tournament, preparation for this month's Australian Open.

"It's a very nice start for the year, especially against a good player. I did a lot of positive things today," said Dementieva, runner-up at last year's French Open and U.S. Open.

"My serve needs improving and I think it was probably the weakest link of my game last year. My serve needs improving."

The fourth-ranked Sharapova was let down by her erratic play. She appeared distracted by several line calls and was startled early in the first set when a boy threw a tennis ball into the court from the spectator stand.

In another match, U.S. Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsov didn't have any problems in beating fellow Russian Vera Zvonareva 6-3, 6-3.

The Williams sisters Zvonareva on Thursday at the six-player, round-robin event, which also includes Nicole Pietrangeli of the Czech Republic.

Ohio State AD Geiger to retire

By RUSTY MILLER

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State athletic director Andy Geiger is retiring after a decade featuring some of the Buckeyes' greatest victories and biggest embarrassments.

From the time Maurice Clarett led the Buckeyes to a football national championship in 2002, the school's athletic department has been beset by NCAA investigations of its football and basketball programs.

"I find my work is no longer fun and I no longer look forward to going to work," Geiger said Wednesday at a news conference. "I'm just tired. Just bone-weary. Not the tired that a good night of sleep fixes. 'Burn-

out,' I guess, is what they call it in the industry."

Geiger, 65, got choked up at one point and took several moments to compose himself. He said the stress of running one of the largest athletic departments in the country led to his decision to leave.

University president Karen Holbrook said Geiger's retirement would be effective June 30. He will stay at the school until June 2006 as a fund-raiser and

consultant.

Geiger, who held the post since 1994, has 17 months left on his contract.

After leading Ohio State to the national title as a freshman, Clarett was suspended for lying to investigators during an NCAA probe of allegations that he received improper benefits from a family friend.

Last month, the school imposed a one-year postseason tournament ban on the men's basketball team over an alleged \$6,000 payment to a recruit by former coach Jim O'Brien.

Holbrook said the firing of O'Brien on June 8 was the first step in appealing NCAA investigations. She and Geiger said more penalties may be coming.

Canada wins World Jr. Hockey title; U.S. fourth

By DAVID KOLPACK

The Associated Press

GRAND FORKS, N.D. — Canada won the world junior hockey championships for the first time since 1997, routing Russia 6-1 on Tuesday night for its 11th overall title.

Jeff Carter and Ryan Getzlaf each had a goal and two assists to help the Canadians end a string of four straight runner-up finishes. Russia beat Canada in the 2002 and 2003 finals and the United States upset the Canadians last year in Finland.

Boston Bruins forward Patrice Bergeron, selected the outstanding player of the tournament, added a power-play goal and an assist in the most lopsided title game since the tournament switched to a bracket format in 1996.

"It's been the experience of my life," Bergeron said. "Canada, which outscored its opponents 41-7 in six games, blew it open with a four-goal second period. Carter began the run, with his routine shot from the right circle fooling goalie Anton Khudobin to make it 3-1 at 3:33.

After Andrei Kuznetsov replaced Khudobin in goal, Bergeron and Anthony Stewart added goals in a 61-second span, and defenseman Dion Phaneuf made it 6-1 with a power-play goal. Canada outshot Russia 15-2 in the second period and 32-19 overall.

"That Canadian got us on a roll," Canadian coach Brent Sturtevant said.

Danny Syvret also scored for Canada.

"They played amazing and deserved to win the gold medal," Russian coach Sergei Gerskovsky said.

Jeff Glass made 13 saves for Canada, allowing only defenseman Alexei Emelin's power-play goal in the first period.

"They are the best team," said Russian star Alexander Ovechkin, who hurt his shoulder in the second period and didn't return.

A pro-Canada crowd dressed in red and white chanted and waived flags throughout the game. Grand Forks is about 75 miles from the Manitoba border and about 150 miles from Winnipeg, a city of 750,000 people.

"To have that much fan support

when you're not at home is unbelievable," Getzlaf said. "A lot of people paid a lot of money to come and support our team."

In the third-place game, Petr Vlasov scored twice to give the Czech Republic a 3-2 victory over the United States.

The United States missed a championship game scheduled for the first time in team history.

"It would have been huge, but it just didn't go our way," University of North Dakota forward Brett Stastny said. "They're a lot much you can say other than it's really disappointing."

White leaves sour taste from Orange

BY JEFF LATZKE
The Associated Press

MIAMI — Oklahoma quarterback Jason White helplessly stood next to tackle Jammal Brown on the sideline, waiting for another chance to make something happen for the Sooners in the Orange Bowl.

Instead, White watched as Southern California scored yet another touchdown. After a brief talk, Brown slapped White on the chest.

There was little that could have made White smile Tuesday night, and Brown didn't succeed. For the second straight season, White guided Oklahoma to the BCS title game and lost. This time, it was a miserable 55-19 defeat to USC — the most lopsided loss since coach Bob Stoops came to Oklahoma in 1999.

The Heisman Trophy winner came back to Oklahoma for a sixth season — two were halted by devastating knee injuries — for a chance to win a Big 12 title and a national championship. He'd talked about it all season, but ended up falling one game short.

"You make it all the way to the end to where you're really where you want and you don't get it," White said. "You know you left everything you had out there."

"I'm just disappointed and embarrassed. I think the whole team would say the same thing."

White's final game was one of his worst. He threw three interceptions for the first time in his Oklahoma career. By the time he got things going, his effort was all but irrelevant.

He threw for 244 yards and two touchdowns on 24-for-36 passing, but it was the interceptions that told the story.

"We turned the ball over, and that killed us," White said.

Freshman star Adrian Peterson didn't fare much better. He had only 36 yards on 15 first-half carries and didn't have a run of 10 yards all game.

He still broke the NCAA freshman rushing record and the Oklahoma single-season record by finishing with 1,925 yards.

"It means nothing to me," Peterson said. "We did not win the game."

The Trojans were able to bottle up the Heisman runner-up at the line of scrimmage and prevent him from breaking away with his remarkable speed. Of his 15 first-half runs, 11 were for 2 yards or less. He had 82 yards on 25 carries for the game.

"They didn't do much different to stop the run," White said. "Like we said all week, they have a great front four. They're team speed is incredibly fast."

They were coached to stop the run, and they did. They tried to take advantage of it passing-wise, and we did the first drive. But then that, we didn't make plays."

White was brilliant on the Sooners' opening possession.

He connected with Will Peoples for an 18-yard gain on his first throw, and capped a 92-yard drive by rifling a slant pass to Travis Wilson to give the Sooners a 7-0 lead.

But White's game fell apart from there. Under pressure early in the game, he tried to force a pass into quadruple coverage to his favorite target, Mark Clayton, and Jason Leach intercepted it at the USC 11.

"It was a horrible decision on my part," White said. "I should have just threw the ball



Oklahoma quarterback Jason White walks the sidelines during the third quarter against Southern Cal in the Orange Bowl.

away, and I didn't. I tried to make a play and tried to throw it up so one of the receivers could jump up and get it, but it was stupid on my part. I should have threw it away."

The Trojans answered by driving 89 yards for a score.

Another pass under duress was thrown down the left sideline toward a well-covered Mark Bradley and was intercepted by Eric Wright. The Trojans scored three plays later to take a commanding 28-7 lead early in the second quarter.

"It's a roller coaster. Sometimes you're high, sometimes you're low," White said. "Right now, it's our low point. There's nothing I can do right now to change it. I can't come back next year and make up for it. It's a low point, but I'll be all right. I'll fight through."

"The sun will come up tomorrow."

BCS goal diminishes Southern Cal romp

MIAMI — If or no absorbing or not, college football ball again coughed up its national championship Tuesday night, the familiar Southern California instead of the familiar Oklahoma.

Somewhere the lesser familiar Auburn bears for justice, justice being entirely unfamiliar to the process. And Utah? Utah! Will always have Tempe.

USC, only half a champion last season, will not have to share this time, thoroughly trouncing the Big 12 Sooners not only sooner, but later and by intermission, the mood of the OU majority in the stands further depressed by a jarring and dreary Orange Bowl half-time show.

The featured performer, a screeching creature named Ashlee Simpson, was booed off the stage, a kindness that was not allowed Oklahoma, which had to further humiliate itself with another half of ragged, obliging ball.

The final score of 55-19 reads much like the engraving on a tombstone. All that's missing is R.I.P. Boomer Sooner.

The teams were as mismatched as a hammer and thumb and the game had all the drama of sweeping up. While the contortions and agonies of finding the two best teams for a final showdown is not an exact science, it is preferable that it be at least one.

Bernie Lincome

This was shoddy guessing.

With all the other hollow and modestly attended bowl games out of the way, it was left to USC and OU to have the system from its own arrogance and absurdity, some several weeks after it could have mattered.

This is like having the wedding after naming the baby, and we can all think of a name for that. In college football it is called the Bowl Championship Series. Same name.

The most lasting remains of the game could be to propel USC quarterback Matt Leinart to the top of the NFL Draft. There seems no reason for him to take a fifth year of school and his appeal is not likely to be any higher than it is right now.

Leinart — tall, left-handed and productive — looks like the next Ben Roethlisberger. He threw an Orange Bowl record five touchdowns, three to flanker Steve Smith, and was the clear MVP of the game.

Leinart played as if his Heisman Trophy were more an ornament than an honor, completely inadequate to convey his talent

and his future.

For a quarterback Jason White of OU, since winning his Heisman in 2003, he has gaggled in successive national title games. While White is not required to return the trophy, maybe he should put a bandage across its eyes so it doesn't have to look at its owner.

Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville tolled the press box before the game, making a personal appeal to sportswriters in The Associated Press poll to split the results as they did last season when the official BCS title went to LSU and the writers' award to USC.

The BCS has become so disagreeable and flawed a California senator is threatening government meddling, the venerable sportswriters poll wants no part four days into the new year, encouraging even the college players to abandon this whole BCS formula, with its rankings and computations and rotating big bowl carnivals.

This is the kind of goal that settles around a national title game, it is just another reason to abandon this whole BCS formula, with its rankings and computations and rotating big bowl carnivals.

College football is clearly copying the Super Bowl formula, setting off the final game from the traditional bowls, already tardy four days into the new year, encouraging even the college players to abandon this whole BCS formula, with its rankings and computations and rotating big bowl carnivals.

Bowl games should be rewards for a season of successful play, defining or character-changing or deals. The bigger the end of things gets, the less vital are the beginnings.

Most of the 27 other sanctioned bowl games were not sellouts.

Attention is paid only by a team's local media. Once pedigreed affairs such as the Sugar Bowl or the Cotton now are merely excuses to have a New Year's parade. Ratings are down, sponsorships last only as long as the marketing manager keeps his job.

Would a more inclusive playoff change any of this? College football not only has to decide if it wants a true football tournament, with eight or even 16 teams, but how to keep the ever more point-less bowls from vanishing altogether.

Still, the BCS has done what it was designed to do, give ABC the last game of the season between the No. 1 and No. 2 college football teams even if the teams did not give ABC much in return.

There is much more money to be made by college football. Old allegiances will give way eventually to a true tournament and the college football season will fade into insignificance, just as every other sport has.

Enjoy, USC. At least you don't have to play Auburn.

Bernie Lincome is a columnist for the Rocky Mountain News.

College football

AP Top 25

The Top 25 teams from The Associated Press college football poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, final records, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote, and previous ranking:

	Record	Pts	Pvs
1. Southern Cal (62)	12-0	1,559	1
2. Auburn (3)	10-3	1,559	3
3. Oklahoma	11-3	989	9
4. Utah	12-0	1,438	5
5. Texas	11-1	1,211	6
6. Louisville	11-1	1,261	7
7. Michigan	10-3	1,161	8
8. Iowa	10-2	1,161	7
9. California	10-2	1,050	4
10. Virginia Tech	10-3	989	9
11. Miami	9-3	917	14
12. Boise St.	9-3	817	15
13. Tennessee	10-3	869	15
14. USC	10-3	869	15
15. Florida St.	9-3	754	17
16. LSU	10-3	98	19
17. Wisconsin	9-3	482	16
18. Texas Tech	9-3	461	21
19. Arizona St.	9-3	461	21
20. Ohio St.	8-4	423	24
21. Boston College	9-3	314	25
22. Fresno St.	9-3	203	—
23. Virginia	10-2	126	—
24. Navy	10-2	126	—

Others receiving votes: Florida: 85, Bowling Green: 75, Texas Tech: 75, Illinois: 27, West Virginia: 24, Oregon St.: 17, Colorado: 13, Minnesota: 12, Southern Cal: 11, Utah: 11, Kansas: 6, Missouri: 6, Southern Miss: 1, UT-Panhandle.

USA Today/ESPN Top 25 poll

The top 25 teams in the USA Today-ESPN college football poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, final records, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and last ranking:

	Record	Pts	Pvs
1. Southern California (61)	13-0	1,525	1
2. Auburn	11-3	1,460	3
3. Oklahoma	11-3	1,366	2
4. Texas	11-1	1,211	6
5. Utah	12-0	1,320	6
6. Georgia	10-2	1,191	7
7. Louisville	10-2	1,191	7
8. Iowa	10-2	1,027	13
9. California	10-2	989	15
10. Virginia Tech	10-3	905	9
11. Michigan	9-3	802	12
12. Tennessee	10-3	869	14
13. Florida St.	9-3	776	15
14. Texas Tech	9-3	776	15
15. Tennessee	10-3	776	15
16. Texas Tech	9-3	478	21
17. Wisconsin	9-3	478	21
18. Ohio St.	8-4	430	22
19. Arizona St.	9-3	430	22
20. Boston College	9-3	245	—
21. Fresno St.	9-3	245	—
22. Virginia	10-2	157	—
23. Navy	10-2	157	—
24. Florida	7-5	101	—
25. Florida	7-5	101	—

Also receiving votes: West Virginia: 40, Bowling Green: 25, Pittsburgh: 40, Illinois: 40, Texas A&M: 15, Colorado: 15, Minnesota: 12, Iowa: 12, Kansas: 12, Missouri: 5, Connecticut: 4, Georgia Tech: 3, Texas Tech: 3, Toledo: 2, Wyoming: 2, Hawaii: 1.

Tuesday

Orange Bowl No. 1 Southern Cal 55, No. 2 Oklahoma 19

Oklahoma 14 20 9-19
Southern Cal 14 20 7-55

OU-TWilson 5 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 7-10

SC—Byrd 3 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 7-17

SC—Wright 5 run (Killeen kick), 17-17

SC—Jarrett 54 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 17-24

SC—S-Mitt 5 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 17-31

OU—FG Leinart 29, 31-0

SC—S-Mitt 33 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 31-0

SC—FG Leinart 44, 35-0

SC—S-Mitt 4 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 35-0

SC—FG Leinart 42, 40-0

SC—Wright 8 run (Killeen kick), 40-0

SC—S-Mitt 10 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 40-0

OU-TWilson 9 pass from Leinart (Killeen kick), 39-0

A-7/9.2.

First downs 19 19

Run plays 40 28

Passing 24 44

Yards 243 135

Turnovers 3 3

Penalties 4 4

Fumbles lost 3 0

Time of possession 35:06 24:54

Individual statistics

Running: Leinart 25-82

Wright 7-42, K Jones 4-7, Wilson 1-5, White 1-18

Byrd 4-25, Kirtman 1-7, Wilson 1-4, Reed 2-2

Passing: Oklahoma 1-0, Wilson 2-36, 2-34, Clayton 1-30, Cassel 0-0-0

Running: Leinart 25-82, Wilson 7-59, Clayton 4-21, Bradley 2-6, K Jones 2-30, Blones 1-13, Kirtman 1-13, Reed 1-13, White 1-18, Peoples 1-18, Mosses 1-8, Southern Cal 2-31, Kirtman 1-15

AP vote for No. 1 nearly unanimous

By RALPH D. RUSSO

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Southern California joined some elite company with its latest AP national title.

The Trojans became just the second team to go No. 1 wire-to-wire in The Associated Press Top 25, and the 10th team to repeat as national champions.

Following a resounding 55-19 victory over Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl, USC received all but three first-place votes early Wednesday to easily outdistance Auburn.

The Trojans (13-0) are the first back-to-back AP champs since Nebraska in 1994-95.

"We are now unanimously No. 1," Orange Bowl MVP Matt Leinart said right after the game.

Not quite, but good enough. USC received 62 first-place votes and 1,622 points. Auburn got the other first-place votes and 1,559 points.

"It's probably hard for you to imagine, but we took this thing in stride, step by step as we went through," USC coach Pete Carroll said. "We didn't talk about national championship very much, the players probably did some."

The Sooners (12-1) finished third, ahead of unbeaten Utah (12-0) and Texas (11-1).

Auburn (13-0) finished its perfect season Monday night with a 16-13 victory over Virginia Tech in the Sugar Bowl.

Tigers coach Tommy Tuberville and his team practically pleaded with poll voters to give his team a championship, but to no avail.

"Anybody who thought that last night was a championship game, I beg to differ," Tuberville said Wednesday morning. "I'm disappointed that with the type of team we had, as balanced as we were, we did not get a chance to play in that game."

The Trojans' 36-point rout was the third-largest margin in a matchup between No. 1 and No. 2 teams.

USC joined Florida State in 1999 as the only teams to be No. 1 from start to finish since the AP started a preseason poll in 1950.

The Trojans are also the 10th preseason No. 1 to win the national championship.

The Trojans' fifth AP title tied with Miami for the fourth most.

Notre Dame leads with eight national titles, followed by Oklahoma with seven and Alabama with six.

And if the Trojans start next season No. 1 — a good possibility, even if Leinart skips his senior season for the NFL Draft — they will match Miami's record of 19 straight polls as No. 1.

No team has ever won three straight AP titles, but USC could enter next season as the favorite to do just that.

Leinart was No. 1 followed by Georgia, Iowa, California and Virginia Tech.

Miami was 11th, and for the first time since 1982, no team from Florida ended the season ranked among the nation's top five.

Navy made it into the rankings for the first time since 1979 at No. 24. Fresno State also joined the poll at 22.

USC: Four unanswered TDs in 10:10 sunk the Sooners

USC, FROM BACK PAGE

"They were prepared to play and came out to play, and we didn't," White said.

Leinart was 18-for-35 for 332 yards and he had the USC band playing "Fight On" all night. The laid-back Californian who replaced Carson Palmer became the first Heisman winner to win a national title since Michigan's Charles Woodson in 1997.

Leinart looked nothing like the overrated quarterback for an average offense, as Oklahoma defensive end Larry Birdine described him.

"They were talking a lot of mess all month," USC defensive Froster Rucker said. "We heard it."

Leinart tossed four scores in the first half as the Trojans turned an early 7-0 deficit into a 38-10 halftime lead.

And then the Trojans had no end. The Trojans grooved in the end zone as Outkast's "Hey Yeah!" blared through Pro Player Stadium. Meanwhile, the Sooners trudged off having already allowed more points in a bowl game than any team in school history.

Leinart shrugged off Birdine's comment and played great with his five fared



USC quarterback Matt Leinart (11) and defensive end Wayne Jarrett celebrate after they connected on a 54-yard touchdown.

well to college football. The junior could be a top pick in the next NFL Draft.

He also got plenty of help. The Trojans reached a season high for points and turned the game into a USC highlight reel,

Trojans' horses settled score

USC had more on offense than '1½-man team'

By JOHN NADEL

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Froster Rucker flashed a wide smile as he posed for pictures with several Southern California cheerleaders.

His expression changed when the camera was put away and he was asked about Oklahoma.

"They were talking a lot of mess all month. We heard it," the USC defensive end said sternly, his eyes narrowed and the smile gone. "They gave us all they had, and it turned out to be not that much."

The top-ranked Trojans routed No. 2 Oklahoma 55-19 Tuesday night in the Orange Bowl to win the BCS title and their second straight Associated Press national championship.

Afterward, they figured it was their turn to talk a little trash.

"I expected it," tailback LenDale White said. "That's what happens when you talk a lot. One Larry Birdine said we were a 1½-man team, I felt disrespected. We took them to the woodshed."

White referred to the Oklahoma defensive end who called USC's offense average, and said quarterback Matt Leinart was overrated and the Sooners would be in great shape if they contained explosive Reggie Bush.

"I guess their focus was Reggie. We have other players besides Reggie," tackle Taitui Luta said.

"We've seen Baylor play them. We're better than Baylor," guard John Drake said.

Leinart passed for 332 yards and an Orange Bowl-record five touchdowns. He might have been the star, but several of his teammates did their part to make him look like this year's Heisman Trophy winner.

White, slowed for weeks by a sprained right ankle he sustained Dec. 4 against UCLA, gained 118



Southern Cal's LenDale White does a Heisman pose with the crystal football trophy after rushing for 118 yards and two touchdowns against Oklahoma.

yards on 15 carries and scored two TDs.

"I was playing a little bit of possum with everybody," he said. "I don't know if I was 100 percent, but I feel great."

White did a Deion Sanders-type celebration dance after scoring his second touchdown early in the fourth quarter, drawing a penalty flag.

It hardly mattered.

USC (13-0) fell behind 7-0 before outscoring the Sooners 38-3 in the last 19½ minutes of the first half to take command.

"Some teams have been up to them, but haven't been able to put them away," linebacker Lofa Tatupu said. "We were able to accomplish that."

Leinart's improbable 33-yard touchdown pass to Dominique Byrd got the Trojans started.

Byrd, a 260-pound tight end, had to corkscrew his body when the pass

was behind him, but managed to snag the ball with his right hand before tumbling into the end zone.

Byrd's teammates mobbed him. "[Leinart] just told me to run hard and get open," he said. "I knew that when the ball was in the air, I had to go up and get it. I had a one-on-one. I always feel when I'm one-on-one, I'm going to take it."

Suddenly, the rout was on.

"We just knew if we played our game, it would turn out that way," said cornerback Eric Wright, who had one of USC's three interceptions.

Bush, a Heisman finalist, gained 75 yards on six carries and caught two passes for 31 yards.

Steve Smith had seven receptions for 113 yards and three touchdowns — two in the second quarter on sliding receptions.

Freshman Dwayne Jarrett caught five passes for 115 yards and one score.

came up with USC's 20th interception of the season.

Then the Trojans went to work on Oklahoma freshman cornerback Marcus Walker with their own star freshman, Dwayne Jarrett.

The 6-foot-5 Jarrett went over the 5-11 Walker for an 18-yard gain on third-and-8. Walker ended up in no-man's land on the next play. He looked like he wanted to blitz but stopped. Jarrett ran straight down the sideline and hauled in a perfect throw from Leinart for a 54-yard score.

The USC deluge continued.

White was upended while throwing and was picked off by Eric Wright deep in Sooners territory, and Leinart found Smith alone in the end zone from 5 yards out, to cap a four-touchdown barrage.

In a span of 10:10, USC turned a 7-0 deficit into a 28-7 lead that left the Sooners looking dumfounded.

USC was shut out of last season's BCS title game, despite topping both polls at the end of the regular season. The BCS computer rankings favored Oklahoma, which then lost to LSU in the Sugar Bowl, giving the Trojans the top spot in the coaches' poll.

SPORTS



O'Neal scores 55 to carry
Pacers over Bucks,
Page 40

USC leaves no doubt

Leinart throws 5 TDs as Trojans overwhelm Sooners for title

BY RALPH D. RUSSO

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Matt Leinart and his Southern California teammates bounced around the end zone, then broke into a victory dance. The celebration was on — and it was only halftime.

Playing to perfection, the Heisman Trophy winner threw a record five touchdown passes and the Trojans overwhelmed Oklahoma 55-19 Tuesday night in the Orange Bowl, ending the season just as they started: No. 1.

"I think we proved tonight that we are the No. 1 team in the country without a doubt," Leinart said. "No doubt."

Even better, there's no one they have to share it with.

The much-anticipated battle of unbeaten, No. 1 vs. No. 2, turned into a coronation for USC, which had to settle for a share of the national championship last year after being left out of the Bowl Championship Series title game.

"We didn't expect it to be this easy, but the game went our way from the beginning," USC coach Pete Carroll said. "I was a little surprised."

USC became the first team to repeat as AP national champions since Nebraska in 1994-95 and joined Florida State in 1999 as the only teams to go wire-to-wire — from preseason to post bowls — as No. 1.

"I think they're great, and they sure proved it," Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops said. "We just got whupped."

Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville was on hand to witness the rout in a game he believed his undefeated team should have been playing in.

"I'd like to play the winner of this game," he said at halftime, trying to be kind because by then the winner was hardly in doubt.

With the aide of four Oklahoma turnovers, the Trojans (13-0) ambushed the Sooners (12-1) with 38 points in the final 20 minutes of the first half.

The first meeting of Heisman winners couldn't have been more one-sided. Leinart set an Orange Bowl record with his five scoring tosses and Jason White spent another BCS title game running for his life.

Oklahoma's Heisman winner finished 24-for-36 for 244 yards with three interceptions and two touchdowns.



Southern Cal's Lofa Tatupu (58) and Keith Rivers (55) celebrate after Tatupu sacked Oklahoma quarterback Jason White (18) during the third quarter of the Orange Bowl on Tuesday night. White was sacked just twice but was harried into three interceptions and several bad throws. AP



Southern Cal had plenty to celebrate as it turned a 7-0 deficit into a 28-7 lead with four unanswered touchdowns and went on to a 55-19 drubbing of Oklahoma in the Orange Bowl on Tuesday night. At right, Dominique Byrd signals touchdown in front of Oklahoma's Lee Blankenship (8) after his 33-yard touchdown catch tied the game in the first quarter. Left, Steve Smith gets hoisted into the air by Alex Holmes after Smith scored his third touchdown of the night in the third quarter. Smith had seven catches for 113 yards.



SEE USC ON PAGE 43

Terps get ready for tough ACC games with rout

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